

'Twas Right to Marry him ;
OR, THE
H I S T O R Y
OF
Miss PETWORTH.

VOL. II.

I was Right to Marry him;



Mrs BET WORTH.

'Twas Right to Marry him;
OR, THE
HISTORY
OF
Miss PETWORTH.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

L O N D O N :

Printed for F. and J. NOBLE, at their respective Circulating
Libraries near Middle-Row, Holborn, and St. Martin's
Court, near Leicester-Square.

MDCCCLXXIV.

Two Right to Many Item

OF THE

WESTON



MR. P. R. TH.

IN THE

VOL. II.

1854

Printed by the British Museum Press, London.

1854

'Twas Right to Marry him ;

Or, the HISTORY of

Miss PETWORTH.

LETTER XLIV.

Mr. SELWYN to Lord HAMPTON.

WHAT a dear, amiable creature
is my Kitty ! I called upon her
this morning when you was from home,
and found her actually weeping over a
letter she had just received from Miss
Petworth. She is much too severe upon
that which Miss Percy wrote to her, in
VOL. II B favour

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favour of Euston's correction of Prideaux's insolence. I could not bear the sight of my Kitty in distress, and made use of every soothing art to alleviate her sorrow, and to render her satisfied with what she had done; assuring her that what she had done could not be disapproved of by any person, unprejudiced by an inveterate dislike. "But supposing Miss Percy did speak too warmly in behalf of Euston," continued I, "it is excusable, as it could only proceed from a great sweetness of temper, from an excess of benevolence which inclined her to wish to contribute as much as possible to the happiness of every individual."

She lifted up her pretty eyes, while I spoke, with a returning cheerfulness in them, which gave me infinite pleasure,

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sure, as I found it immediately proceeded from the consolation she had received from what I had been saying; for with the sweetest accents she replied, "You do not then really think I have said too much, Mr. Selwyn? I am glad of it—I should not, indeed, have ventured so far, had you not encouraged me: but you are very good," added she, with the most obliging smile.

"How happy am I, my dear Miss Percy," replied I, "to find that you place any confidence in my judgment, which shall ever be exerted for your service."

"Your advice will ever give me great pleasure," answered she, "and I shall always follow it to the utmost of my power."

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She will, I dare say, strictly adhere to her promise, as it was made with her own free will. A speech of this kind is by no means, I imagine, commonly articulated by ladies under the same predicament with Miss Percy. Few women, during the season of courtship, think of saying or doing any thing to please their lovers, expecting all sorts of assiduities and attentions from *them*. They seem to be of opinion that men should not only dedicate all their time, but rack their brains, and lavish their fortunes, in trying to procure new, and, frequently, the most ridiculous amusements; forgetting that a man of sense naturally wishes to see the woman with whom he is desirous of spending his life, discover an inclination to spend *hers* in a rational manner with him. There are some women, I know, who will

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will declare that love and reason are incompatible, and that the man who sits down calmly to converse with his mistress, as his best and dearest friend, without proposing continually to carry her to some of the public places, merely to be stared at, and to shew her consequence, is a wretch not worthy of any woman's notice. Kitty is, happily for me, of a very different disposition: I never, indeed, met with a young person of her sex with so thorough a relish for domestic enjoyments; with such a woman alone can I taste felicity. I have, it is true, for some time, despaired of finding Miss Percy disposed to receive me in the light in which I wish to be looked, but I think I have now reason to hope that I am no longer disagreeable to her.

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When I dropped a hint of this sort to day, she replied, "How could you ever suppose that I thought you disagreeable, Mr. Selwyn?"

"Well, my dear Miss Percy, I will allow that you *never* thought me disagreeable; but was it not possible for you to think some other person more disagreeable?"

A rosy blush overspread her fair face--- she covered it with her hand till the glow began to subside, and then said, "But why, because I was not quite ready to agree to every thing you asked, why must you imagine I prefer any other person to *you*? Cannot women be supposed to like a single state better than any other?"

"Such

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"Such a state is so unnatural, that---"

"Well then," replied she, interrupting me, and still blushing, "make some allowance for us, and attribute our not being eager to enter into a state which must be allowed to be full of uncertainty, to the delicacy of our sensations, and the alarms occasioned by our apprehensions. And pray tell me, where is the man or woman, who being perfectly contented, would be thought discreet, by changing a situation certainly happy, for a doubtful one?"

What a pretty way of talking! I could not help pressing her to my bosom, and I thought that she did not shew so much repugnance to the effusions of my fond heart, as she discovered before. If she can be brought, at last,

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to feel as much tenderness for *me* as I feel for *her*, I shall be the happiest of men, as I never yet met with a woman so entirely to my taste. There are, indeed, but very few women existing (I may venture to say) with whom I could be happy. My taste is like yours, my Lord, so opposite to the fashionable style of living, that I am afraid there are not many women who would conform to it, or who *could*, I may add, conform to it: and even some of *those* might, perhaps, be extremely disagreeable to me. Kitty, on the other hand, is every thing I can wish for, in person and temper---How greatly am I obliged to your Lordship for inviting me so early to see her! for giving me every opportunity to win her to my arms!

I am

your Lordship's most faithful

SELWYN.

P. S.

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P. S. Miss Percy is going to try to prevail on Miss Petworth to forgive her for what cannot fairly be said to merit pardon. However, she cannot be easy till she and her friend are upon their former footing again.

LETTER XLV.

MISS PETWORTH to Miss PERCY.

I HAVE but just leisure to tell you that we are going to Peterham for a few days. Mr. Edwards cannot be weaned from his retreat; he has assured Mrs. Buller and me that he shall be much happier there with *our* company. He is so good natured, that it is almost impossible to refuse him any thing. I think, indeed, that, setting one sub-

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stantial reason aside—I should not know how to deny him even my *hand*, should he ask me for it : but there must ever be an unsurmountable bar to the future happiness of your

HEBE PETWORTH.

LETTER XLVI.

Mr. EUSTON to Sir WALTER CAREY.

MISS Percy has been so obliging as to let me see a letter from her charming friend, written with a good-natured design to make me easy with regard to her marrying. The perusal of this letter has made me half frantic ; for she declares in it that she would give her hand to Edwards, was there

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there not *an unsurmountable bar to her future felicity.*

Heavens! What can she mean? Surely she does not think herself *unhappy* because she has not Edwards!

I shall go distracted! but it cannot be—She might, certainly, marry Edwards immediately if she chose it—What in the name of fortune can hinder her? Here is some mystery which I cannot unravel—It is inexplicable. I will, however, leave nothing undone to come at a solution of it. I actually believe that the anxiety I endure will soon remove me out of the world—No matter how soon I am out of it; I have been some time quite weary of existence. Tortured as I am in my mind, and labouring under a severe indisposition, in conse-

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quence of my agonizing sensations, I cannot think of coming to you agreeable to my intention and my promise—I am fit for nothing. Ludicrous as you may suppose my present situation to be, I am of opinion, that were you to see me, you would find me an object truly to be pitied. Do not then expect a visit from me.

Adieu.

E. EUSTON.

LETTER XLVII.

Miss PERCY to Miss PETWORTH.

I AM quite sorry that you are gone, my dear Hebe, and without my speaking to you, as I had a thousand things to say to you, many of which I should

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should not chuse to write, supposing I had leisure. But there is something very material with which *I must* acquaint you, lest you should hear it from any other quarter, and accuse me of insincerity; a charge I do not deserve, however guilty you may think me of other faults. You will chide me, I imagine, but I cannot help confessing that I read your last letter to Mr. Euston, because he was so uneasy about Mr. Edwards; and because I thought, by that means, to make him more composed. I really *was*, and am still afraid that his anxiety upon *your* account, will be attended with bad consequences. And surely, Hebe, you cannot be angry with me for doing every thing in my power to comfort him, as he is now actually an object of pity. Yet if I
am

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am wrong, I am sorry for it, and submit to your better judgment.

You are not gone, I hope, to shut yourself up long with Mr. Edwards; especially so early in the spring; for though nobody is a greater admirer of the country than I am, yet I think it not warm enough to leave London: and *you* was formerly of the same opinion. I wish you were so at present, as I do not like your being at such a distance from

your affectionate

C. PERCY.

LET.

LETTER XLVIII.

Miss PETWORTH to Miss PERCY.

YOU are an incorrigible girl, Kitty : all my talking to you signifies nothing. I have a great mind to be very angry with you, only I think I shall throw away my time ; I will, therefore, let you alone and talk about myself. I believe, indeed, that *you* are not principally in fault in this affair : the two gentlemen who have so much influence over you, are more blameable. I think I read Lord Hampton and Mr. Selwyn in every line. It is not at all surprising, however, that men should stand by each other ; though they may be extremely
in

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in the wrong, they will certainly enter into a combination against women; so take care of yourself, Kitty, I shall not imagine you are safe till you are married to Mr. Selwyn, and then he will not act prudently if he does not take particular care of you, as you are not able to take care of yourself. For my own part, though there may be the greatest objections to my marrying one man, there may be none to my marrying another. As to the country, it appears pleasant, in all seasons of the year, to

your sincere friend

HEBE PETWORTH.

L E T.

LETTER XLIX.

MISS PERCY TO MISS PETWORTH.

WHAT a short, and almost angry letter was your last, my dear Hebe! Yet I will not take any thing amiss of my friend—I may have deserved, though not intentionally, her anger. I therefore continue to write, and hope she will not deprive me of the pleasure of her correspondence, if I cannot have that of her company.

I wish you were in town now, my dear, and willing to be of our party—We are to go to the masqued ball tomorrow. Lady Hampton condescends to take me under her care, though I believe

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lieve Mr. Selwyn will be my protector. My Lord is to go also, and Mrs. Brudenel. My dress, at his Lordship's desire, is to be a quaker's; Mr. Selwyn highly approves of it, and, flatteringly, tells me that I want no ornaments to set me off. The gentlemen are both to be in dominos, and so, I fancy, is my Lady and Mrs. Brudenel. I had not the least inclination to go myself—Mr. Selwyn, who, I must do him the justice to say, is very assiduous to please me, asked me. I refused him: but my Lord said that I had better go before I was married than after. He then added, that when I had once been, I might not, perhaps, be eager to go again. Mr. Selwyn replied, that I should never, at any time, lay the smallest restraint on my actions: that he should always be most happy when I

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was so. I have a notion, however, that I shall not be fond of this diversion, and am quite indifferent about going to it: but as it is determined, I shall be submissive; though I should be far more pleased to have my dear Hebe with me. Could you not prevail upon Mrs. Bul-ler and Mr. Edwards to come to town, and accompany you? We might then meet, and our meeting would considerably increase *my* pleasure: but if you *should* come, I hope you will let me know what dress you intend to appear in, or I shall not be able to find you out. Write to me immediately, therefore, and believe me

ever your affectionate

C. PERCY.

LET.

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LETTER L.

From the SAME to the SAME.

AND so you would not come to the ball, Hebe? nor write to let me know whether you would come or no? I do not know if you would have been diverted; I was not at all diverted myself; I was only embarrassed and perplexed by a gipsy who followed me from place to place the first part of the evening, and insisted upon telling me my fortune; but when Mr. Euston, who was there too, asked her to look on *his* hand, she refused him for a great while—I cannot tell, indeed, whether she complied, at last, with his request, though

though he pressed her exceedingly. However, she told *me* such things, such truths too, that she put me quite out of countenance. She told me that I was going to marry one man though I was in love with another. This speech was made before Lord Hampton and Mr. Selwyn—Guess how I looked. I felt my face as red as fire, for I could not help thinking that Lord Hampton saw me through my mask. I trembled like a leaf—he kindly supported me with his arm, and when I expressed my vexation at being talked to in this manner by a person who was a stranger to me, he laughed at my awkward distress, and said that neither Selwyn nor any body else would believe her. I did not like to be exposed so, and by a person I knew nothing of—I do not like any disguise: so little, indeed, did I conform

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form to the customs of the place, that I had my mask in my hand a great part of the night, and nothing could have obliged me to wear it but the staring of the men, who were really so impertinent sometimes, that I was under a necessity of putting it on, though almost stifled with the heat occasioned by the crowd, and by being so much looked at. I was exceedingly glad when we went home; when I had got rid of my troublesome gipsy, and left the rest of the company behind me. I believe, however, that I obliged both my Lord and Mr. Selwyn to go home sooner on my account than was agreeable to them: but neither of them seemed to be sorry at my not being enchanted with masquerades. Mr. Selwyn appeared quite in raptures at my indifference about them, at my declared dislike to them, indeed; and

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and my Lord looked as if he never had been so well pleased with me. He told me that I became my dress. I replied, "It is no wonder, my Lord, as you chose it yourself." He bowed and said, "I am extremely obliged to you, Miss Percy, for your good opinion of my taste." How flattering is a compliment from *him*! How delightful is it to be commended by the man who appears to us in the most engaging light! Mr. Selwyn said a hundred fine things. I mention Mr. Selwyn, as I know you think I ought to take notice of *him* as well as my Lord—but I cannot write any more. Do come and hear the rest from

your very sincere

C. PERCY.

LET-

LETTER LI.

Mr. EUSTON to Sir WALTER CAREY.

I WAS last night at the masqued ball, and, by turns, as happy and as miserable a man as I have been at any period of my life.

Having, for some time past, made it my business to watch Miss Petworth's motions, I discovered that she and her two friends designed going to the *Pantheon*. My next business was to learn in what dress she was to appear, and I heard it was that of gipsy. I then went thither in a domino; but taking no great pains to conceal myself, and
being

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being in Lord Hampton's party, when I arrived there, she found me out, and refused to look in my hand, though she had been both severe and witty in the examination of the palms of her acquaintance. Upon this, I withdrew, and changing my dress to that of a sultan, returned. I then found an opportunity to engage her as a partner for the evening. I think I never heard more good things said by any mask in my life, and all in the character of a gipsy, which she admirably supported, and discovered an infinite fund of humour. Little imagining that she was addressing herself to the very man whom she had so studiously avoided, she gave a loose to her pleasantry, which was entertaining beyond expression. She permitted me to be near her the whole evening, and to lead her

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among the dancers, among whom she acquitted herself in a manner absolutely enchanting. Had I had not been in love with her before, I should have been distractedly so at that time. But to what purpose have I enjoyed so much happiness? The moment she knows that *I* was the person with whom she seemed to be entertained, she will repent of every kind of politeness she shewed me, and even hate herself for having treated me with common civility. I am of opinion, however, that she cannot be going to be married to Edwards; if she is, her leaving him for almost the whole night, and attaching herself to *me* entirely, as soon as I had changed my dress, was odd. She cannot, it is plain, I think, feel any kind of aversion to my person or to my conversation; it can only be the indiscretion of my behaviour

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to her while we were at the inn, which has set her so much against me. For that behaviour I have sincerely repented; yet she will not be brought to hear of me, knowing me to be Euston, though she seemed to listen to me with pleasure, even with eagerness, while she was ignorant of my name. How whimsically, as well as disagreeably, am I situated, to be certain that neither my person, nor my present behaviour is offensive! Far otherwise: yet were she to really love me, she would, I believe, rather die than consent to make either me or herself happy.

Kitty Percy, in her quaker's gown and pinched cap, looked the demurest little toad you ever saw. She is the best of girls: yet were she at liberty, she

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could never supply the place of her
friend Hebe, in the heart of
your

E. EUSTON.

LETTER LII.

Miss PETWORTH to Miss PERCY.

YOUR curiosity shall be gratified immediately, Kitty; *I* was, myself, the tormenting gipsy whom you complained of so much, who teased you so much at the Pantheon. Can you, in return, tell me who the charming *sultan* was, so close to me all the night? To say the truth, Kitty, were it possible for me to think seriously about any man, I should think of *him*: so easy, so graceful a figure—so fine a taste in dancing—

dancing—so much true politeness in his manner—His conversation, my dear girl, was quite enchanting—Never, in my whole life, did I pass my time more agreeably ; the hours flew away imperceptibly. When the moment of separation arrived, I felt myself actually unwilling to go home ; I was really sorry to leave a place where I had not expected to meet with any pleasure, and to which I went, merely to oblige Mrs. Buller, who had taken a sudden fancy to go to it. When I found, indeed, that I could not easily avoid going, I thought of making the scheme as agreeable to me as possible, and imagined that in the character of a gipsy, I should have the best opportunity to amuse myself by asking questions. When I was in that tempting situation, I could not resist the desire I felt to divert myself with you, my dear Kitty. I sincerely ask your

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pardon; you did not, indeed, deserve my teasing behaviour, for you never looked so pretty in your life, and had you not permitted a certain gentleman to be of your party, I should say you never looked half so good. There was a modesty, an innocence in your countenance, which discovered the gentlest, the best heart in the world: but how you, with so excellent a heart can believe every thing which Euston says, and think him in the right to expect to be forgiven, I cannot imagine. Your own goodness, my dear, prevents you from supposing that any people are worse than yourself.

Wishing that you may not see your error too late, I remain,

yours most affectionately

HEBE PETWORTH.

P. S. Don't forget to find out *my sultan*.

L E T.

LETTER LIII.

EDWARD EUSTON, Esq. to
SIR WALTER CAREY, Bart.

I AM almost transported out of my senses. Hebe, the divine Hebe, is really charmed with me ; that is, without believing the *sultan* to be *Euston*.

I told you, that I thought she seemed uncommonly pleased with my company at the masked ball. As I earnestly wished for a confirmation of the happiness which I enjoyed that night, I went to Lord Hampton's.

I found Miss Percy writing to her friend, whom I expected every minute ;

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but she did not come. I therefore returned the next day.

I then found her reading a letter she had received from Miss Petworth to my Lord and Mr. Selwyn.

She was going to put her letter into her pocket, but my Lord stopped her. "Only read part of it to him; there can be no harm in his hearing what she says of the *sultan*, with whom she danced."

Kitty coloured, and appeared loth to comply. Wild with impatience, I then flew to her, and at her knees intreated her compliance with my Lord's request.

"Pshaw!

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"Pshaw! get up, Mr. Euston," replied she, "why should you be so desirous of hearing that Miss Petworth has taken a sort of fancy to another gentleman?"

"That is not true, Kitty," said my Lord.

"Yes, indeed," cried she, "as Miss Petworth did not in the least suppose that the sultan was Mr. Euston."

"Has she then writ about me?"
"About the sultan, I mean? Dear Miss Percy, pray tell me — I cannot live without hearing every particular relating to my charming Hebe."

"There," said my Lord, laughing, "'tis all out, you may as well

“ shew him the letter now, as he guesses
 “ every word in it.”

“ Indeed, my Lord, I must not,”
 answered she, with an embarrassed air,
 while I remained in my supplicating at-
 titude, and Mr. Selwyn, without en-
 deavouring to bias her one way or the
 other, hung over her enamoured. To
him the amiable Girl, at last appealed :
 —“ Is it right now, Mr. Selwyn, to
 “ betray secrets, by shewing private let-
 “ ters ?”

“ Certainly not, my dear Miss Percy ;
 “ but here was no secrecy enjoined :
 “ and I really think that the discover-
 “ ing Miss Petworth’s preference of
 “ Mr. Euston, were it not for the im-
 “ propriety of his conduct, does her the
 “ greatest honour, as she plainly shews
 “ that

“that tho’ she likes the man she dislikes
 “his behaviour; and were women in
 “general, to make such a distinction
 “oftner, men would be deterred from
 “taking the unwarrantable liberties they
 “too frequently do.”

“Ay, come, read it to him, Kitty,”
 said my Lord; “it will only make him
 “the more sensibly regret his past con-
 “duct.”

“I do most feelingly repent of it, my
 “Lord,” said I, “and am very ready
 “to make all the reparation for it in my
 “power. Your Lordship, Mr. Selwyn,
 “Miss Percy, all know that I languish
 “with the most anxious desire, with the
 “most eager impatience, for an oppor-
 “tunity to verify the truth of this asser-
 “tion, By seeing Miss Petworth’s sen-
 C 6 “timents,

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“timents, therefore, concerning me—
“even while I was unknown to her—
“I may, most probably, learn something
“to forward the accomplishment of my
“warmest wishes.”

In short, I pleaded so hard, that at last Miss Percy indulged me, by reading that part of her friend's letter to me, which related to her being so much pleased with a gentleman in the dress of a sultan, whose person, dancing and conversation particularly, she admired, and whom she was sorry to leave when the hour of separation arrived. Guess if I was not in raptures at the hearing myself mentioned in so favourable, so flattering a manner: surely, after such a confession she cannot still continue to be inexorable, when she comes to know that I am the very man whom she has
honoured

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honoured with so many marks of her approbation. Still however I am afraid that she will reject me, if I make any new attempts towards a reconciliation.

I am now exceedingly distressed how to act, and wish for your opinion, as you must own I have a very nice game to play.

I am yours most sincerely, but never more embarrassed in my life,

E. EUSTON.

P. S. We have concluded upon Miss Percy's telling her friend that I was the sultan, in question.

L E T.

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LETTER LIV.

Miss PETWORTH to Miss PERCY.

Petersham.

WE are returned to this place, my dear Kitty. I called at Lord Hampton's, but you was gone to Mrs. Brudenel's, and I had not leisure to call again.

We have an addition to our society here, by the arrival of Colonel Fane: I sometimes suspect *him* to be the *sultan* who pleased *me* so much at the masked ball. He greatly resembles, in shape, size, and air, *that mask*; and I think he converses pretty nearly in the same engaging

gaging manner. I never saw him dance ; but if he is as well versed in the practical part, as he seems to be in the theory, he must be the man. He owns that he was *there*, in a Spanish dress, but is silent as to what passed ; and you know I cannot ask particulars. I cannot ask him if *he* was the person so near me all the evening. I am sure he is now so, and *will* be, if he is not already, a lover.

We pass our time mighty pleasantly here. We only want an admirer for Mrs. Buller. She has, undoubtedly, many admirers, but I mean one quite agreeable to her. She is still young, and handsome, and having been married once unhappily, ~~has~~ the greater reason, I hope, to expect better fortune a second time. She is perfectly amiable, you have acknowledged, from the little
you

you have seen of her, and were you to know more of her, you would like her more. Young as she is, she has an infinite deal of discretion, and a fund of entertainment, with which none, but those who very intimately converse with her, are acquainted.

We are now going to Cobham, in two post-chaises : Mr. Edwards and I in one ; Mrs. Buller and Colonel Fane in the other ; though I see by his eyes, he had rather be by my side. Am I not monstrously vain ? It would make any woman so, to see herself preferred to Mrs. Buller.

I think I read more of my Lord than of Mr. Selwyn in your letters. Indeed you are wrong, Kitty. Mrs Buller lately told me that she has long known Mr,
Selwyn,

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Selwyn, and that there is not a more pleasing, a more worthy man in the world. She also told me a little piece of secret history. *Her* father, it seems, and Mr. Selwyn's father, had designed them for each other, but the young people never met; and Mr. Buller seeing her, while Mr. Selwyn was making the tour of Europe, offered such advantageous proposals to her father, that he immediately closed with them. By that proceeding she was injured in every shape, deprived of the most amiable man in the world, and married to one quite the reverse. He lived but three years indeed with her; yet being of a very extravagant turn, he was not able to leave his widow a large fortune; a trifle, compared with what she might rationally enough have expected, as she was obliged, in a manner, to give up a considerable part of
her

her jointure: that is, she chose to relinquish it, to save her husband from utter ruin, and in hopes of reclaiming him: but there are some men, Kitty, never to be reclaimed. Buller was one of them, I find. I wish Mrs. Buller had been married to Selwyn, and then he would see the difference between the behaviour of the woman he now loves, and the woman to whom he *was* to be married. Do not mistake me, my dear; I don't by any means, intend to lessen *you*: I speak only with regard to Mr. Selwyn, whom you do not, I fear, sufficiently love yet, to be happy. With him, I fancy, Mrs. Buller could be happy, without any love at all on *his* side. However, as she never made such a declaration, I may be mistaken. I cannot, indeed, tell how I came to say any thing about it; and I beg that what I *have* said

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said may he locked up in your own breast.

I am

yours very affectionately,

HEBE PETWORTH.

LETTER LV.

MISS PERCY TO MISS PETWORTH.

I AM exceedingly sorry that I happened to be out the day you called on me, my dear Hebe, as I had a great deal to say to you: but I hope what I am now going to write, will be as much to the purpose as if I had talked to you an hour or two. I cannot, in the least, tell whether you are mistaken about Mrs. Buller, but I am sure you are extremely so with regard to your Colonel Fane.

He

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He was not the person by your side all the evening at the masked ball—Mr. Euston was the man—Mr. Euston was your admired sultan, my dear. Transported at having been so near you, and at finding that his assiduities were most favourably received, he wishes very earnestly for an opportunity to be near you in a less public way; he wishes to throw himself at your feet. I believe, indeed, that Mr. Euston is exceedingly concerned for having behaved in such a manner as to prejudice you so strongly against him. I also think, I may say, indeed, I am pretty sure, he will never be happy, unless you receive him upon the same footing as you did before this unlucky difference happened between you.

You sometimes imagine me very indelicate, I believe, Hebe, by saying so much upon a subject, in which I cannot, perhaps,

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perhaps, becomingly, interest myself: but as I not only hear it often mentioned, as I am pressed to say every thing that can be said to Mr. Euston, as I am also sensible—if there is any dependence on appearances—that he is really miserable at your persisting to reject him, and that he will never designedly offend you again, I should be ashamed to neglect an opportunity of serving a man who is really amiable in every respect, and who has been guilty of but one fault—a fault indeed of such a nature that every woman ought to look upon it with detestation, yet as it has been sincerely repented of, it ought to be forgiven. In this manner Lord Hampton and Mr. Selwyn, in this manner Mr. Euston himself perpetually talks to me. My Lord, who is very nice, with regard to female honour, often says that no woman can be too careful, both of her person and character :

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rafter: adding, however, that in some cases, their behaviour may be construed into downright prudery. “Every thing, continues he, “is wrong when carried “to excess; and nothing can be perfectly “right which is not agreeable to the ex- “act medium in morality that puts every “thing on a proper footing. Even vir- “tue when it is sour, severe, and rigidly “censures the conduct of others, be- “comes less pure, and almost degene- “rates into vice; as the want of charity “is certainly a very considerable imper- “fection in a human creature. *Charity,* “we are told, *covers a multitude of sins,* and “what is charity, but a readiness to think “well of every person, to do all the good “we can, and to forgive injuries: to “forgive not only those who have slight- “ly offended us, but also our greatest “enemies?”

If

If this mode of reasoning be a just one (and there is all the reason in the world to believe that it *is* a just one) can I have said too much in favour of Euston? However I now declare that I will have done with this subject for ever. If, after all, you should take him, in consequence of being over persuaded, and if he should not behave well, I shall look upon myself as the cause of your unhappiness. I think, indeed, that as I have said so much by the way of advice to you, I ought to take a little myself. I ought to conquer every kind of repugnance to a man whom every body, I find, very justly admires and esteems; a man who treats me with a consideration, and a tenderness which would most sensibly affect every woman except myself. *His* behaviour, added to my Lord's giving me no encouragement to suppose

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pose that he likes me—(though there are too many men who will give *such* encouragement, while they have rather an aversion to the woman encouraged, or consult only the gratification of their own vanity, by amusing themselves with her) ought to determine me at once in his favour.—I have said I will do what is right—I will say no more.—I will endeavour to do it, that I may be worthy of the affection of Mr. Selwyn, and of the friendship of my Hebe—I am often her weak, but I am always her sincere,

C. PERCY.

LET.

LETTER LVI.

Mr. EUSTON to Sir WALTER CAREY.

I Have now all imaginable reason to give up every hope of happiness with Miss Petworth, notwithstanding all the flattering things she said of me at the masked ball. She is at this very time receiving the addresses of Colonel Fane, who is gone down with her, and Mrs. Buller, to Edwards's, at Petersham. She believes, it seems, that Fane was the man who danced with her, and talked with her all the evening: the man whom she so much admired in the dress of a sultan. Here has been some confounded mistake, at least, I am afraid that I shall find it

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so. I have been setting my wits to work to please her, and Fane is like to reap the benefit of them. You bid me let her alone; telling me, that such a way of proceeding is the only one to gain her. I desire, however, that you will consider how mighty easy it is to give advice, how very difficult it is to take it. Yet I believe I shall follow *your* advice, and for the very best reason in the world—because I do not know what to do better. I need not be so anxious, as I am now pretty sure that I shall not live long enough to give any body much trouble about me, in this affair, or in any other. But I cannot shake off the tenderness I have so long felt for Miss Petworth: it will adhere to me, to my latest breath. My tenderness and my life must leave me at the same time.

Adieu.

E. EUSTON.
LET.

MISS PETWORTH. 51

LETTER LVII.

Mr. SELWYN to Lord HAMPTON.

I Am sorry to find that Miss Percy would still be glad to get rid of her engagements with me.

While I was, during your absence from home, last night, sitting by her, talking fondly of my approaching happiness, and expressing my wishes for a near day, she listened to me, I thought, with a very complaisant attention.

Starting forward, on a sudden, in her chair, and looking full in my face, with all that beautiful simplicity which is so natural to her, and which renders her so engaging, she said, "Don't you think,

D 2

" Mr.

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“ Mr. Selwyn, that a man must stand a
“ chance of being infinitely happier with
“ a woman who is deeply in love with
“ him, than with a woman whom he only
“ loves without being beloved in re-
“ turn?”

Here she paused—I but too plainly understood the drift of her question. I felt an inexpressible anxiety at the delivery of it, at a time when I had hoped, when I had indeed believed, she had overcome all her scruples and prepossessions against marriage, and was ready to yield to my wishes. I recovered myself, however, as soon as possible, and replied, I entirely differed with her upon that one point; adding, that I believed I agreed with her upon every other. “ I really think,” continued I, “ that every man must be infinitely hap-
“ pier—

MISS PETWORTH. 53

“ pier—to adopt your own words—
“ with the woman he loves ; as there is
“ an unutterable pleasure in striving to
“ please the object of our inclination,
“ and to excite a passion in *her* bosom,
“ equal to that glowing in his own.”

“ And why,” said she, “ cannot a
“ passion already excited, give you as
“ much pleasure ? Gratitude for the
“ esteem and affection discovered for us,
“ added to the certainty of being sin-
“ cerely beloved, should, I imagine,
“ give us satisfactions superior to the
“ most animating sensations, occasioned
“ by the mere hopes of gaining a heart,
“ without being assured of success.”

“ I am glad you think so,” replied I,
pressing her hand, “ as no person can
“ possibly be more tenderly, more fond-

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“ly beloved than you are by *me*. My
 “heart is entirely at *your* disposal; I ad-
 “mire you almost to adoration. Let
 “me then have the transporting plea-
 “sure to find you perfectly satisfied with
 “the sincerity of my passion; and though
 “no gratitude can be due where the af-
 “fection is involuntary, yet let but my
 “ardent love excite the same tender
 “sensations in *your* gentle bosom—I
 “ask no more.”

“Very true,” cried she, as if just
 waked from a reverie—“but when there
 “is one already excited in the bosom
 “of a most amiable woman, why will
 “not that be sufficient? Why can-
 “not you be happy if your conquests
 “are not numerous and extensive?”

“I do

MISS PETWORTH. 55

" I do not desire them to be so," replied I. " Could I only gain *your* heart, " I should be quite contented."

" But if you are already possessed of " the heart of a charming woman, why " should you not be satisfied with *her* " affection ? why should you give " yourself trouble about any other ? " Besides is it not extremely cruel to " neglect *her*, who is, you are sure, " fondly attached to you, for one who " is rather indifferent about you ?"

She looked at me, while she pronounced the few last words, with a side glance, to see how I received them. I was not a little mortified indeed, to hear her so freely confess her indifference about me—it pained me to the soul. However as I believed that nothing was

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so likely to prevent any farther conversation of this sort, as a total carelessness on *my* part, I assumed, immediately, a tranquillity, which I did not by any means feel, and catching her hand, eagerly kissed it : assuring her, at the same time, that as I had never thought seriously of any woman except *her*, I was now very certain that I never should, and therefore would avail myself of her consenting to be mine—adding, I doubted not but that her consent would lay a foundation for our mutual happiness—I begged her very strenuously not to postpone it, and told her also, that I had *your* sanction for what I had been saying; that *you* earnestly wished she would oblige me.

“ Does my Lord,” answered she, with a rosy blush, and a half suppressed sigh,

sigh, "earnestly desire to get rid of
"me?"

"Not to get rid of you, my dear
"Miss Percy," said L. "No person who
"is happy enough to engage your com-
"pany, can harbour such a wish: but as
"my Lord, in the enjoyment of your
"society, found his esteem increase for
"you, it was natural for him to feel
"an increasing desire to promote your
"felicity; and he, as naturally, be-
"lieves—as well as hopes, that your
"felicity will be permanent, when you
"are united to a man who adores you,
"who will make it the whole study of
"his life to heighten the pleasure of
"yours."

She returned no answer to this speech,
for some moments, and I strove to draw

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the conversation into another channel—she was however inattentive to every subject which I started ; and at last, looking up again in my face, she said, “ Indeed, Mr. Selwyn, I never knew a man who had so little curiosity, so little vanity, I may say.”

“ You will not like me the worse for that, I hope,” replied I, smiling.

“ No,” said she ; “ but few men are so perfectly indifferent, as not to express the least desire of knowing who is the lady that has distinguished them.”

“ I desire to be distinguished by no lady but yourself, madam,” said I ; “ and if I *knew* the lady in question, who *has* done me the honour to declare a partiality for me, it would make no alteration in *my* sentiments. It would, perhaps,

“perhaps, wound *her* delicacy, to find
 “find me insensible of the preference
 “she flattered me with: it is therefore
 “better for *me*—it is certainly more
 “polite to *her*—to remain perfectly ig-
 “norant of her.”

She appeared disconcerted at this de-
 termined coolness; but when she found
 that all she could say, instead of produ-
 cing any change in me, only urged me
 to become more pressing, she gave up
 the point, and, at length, yielded so far
 to my intreaties, as to consent to *your*
 naming the day of my happiness. Pray
 be speedy in the nomination of *that day*,
 as you cannot but be sensible I wish for
 it with the greatest eagerness: for *that*
day which is to give this amiable girl to
 my arms, who is infinitely desirable, in

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my opinion, with all her *coldness*: it may be imputed, in a great measure, to her modesty and her delicacy—I prefer her a thousand times to those young women who, on the point of being made brides, betray an impatient expectation in their looks, and who are, indeed, very often more ready to run into the arms of other men than into those of their husbands. My charming Kitty will never, I am persuaded, be one of this sort; tho' at the same time, I cannot help wishing she would discover a little more inclination to become the wife of

your faithful

SELWYN.

LET.

MISS PETWORTH. 61

LETTER LVIII.

MISS PERCY TO MISS PETWORTH.

TH^O' I had promised to comply with Mr. Selwyn's intreaties, yet what you hinted, my dear Hebe, in your last letter, so deeply engaged my attention, that I have ever since been thinking how much happier Mr. Selwyn would be, if married to the woman who loves him, than to *her* whom he loves without having his passion returned. Full of this idea I ventured to mention it to him yesterday ; but I did not name the lady : I did not, indeed, intend to name her, till I had made him eager enough to wish to know who she was,
and

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and even found him disposed to give me up for *her*. But I had no success: I could not prevail on him to think as I do, upon a subject so very interesting to us both. I must therefore, at my Lord's request, seconded by Mr. Selwyn's persevering importunities, prepare for an event which seems to be inevitable; an event which every body appears to desire, as well as Mr. Selwyn. Lord Hampton, Mrs. Brudenel, and even *Lady Hampton*, (who rarely does me the honour to trouble herself about me) press me. What can I do? I am exceedingly harrassed—I wish you was here to support and assist

your

C. PERCY.

LET-

LETTER LIX.

From the SAME to the SAME.

MY dear Hebe, how much am I teased to make haste! To induce me to be grateful as well as complying, Mr. Selwyn has sent me *such* a box of jewels—they would dazzle the eyes of half the girls in town; yet *I* look on them quite unmoved. When I thanked him for them, I only said, “They are very fine, I think.”

He replied, that he had no design to make any addition to my person with them, as *that* wanted no ornament to set it off; adding, that he was determined that I should command every thing I wished for.

What

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What can I do with such a man as this? He is all generosity and greatness of mind. I hope I shall be capable of rendering myself deserving of so much affection.

The settlement is also vastly more than *my* fortune can demand. But will money make people happy? Will diamonds oblige us to change our inclinations? They may, indeed, make me grateful; but I fear they will not make me what I ought to be—what I wish to be. I believe, however, that if I had known Mr. Selwyn before I came to Lord Hampton's, I should not have been the perverse creature I now am. Yet I will strive—I will force myself to look upon the man whom I am to marry, in the light he deserves. Why will you not come, my dear Hebe,
and

MISS PETWORTH. 65

and assist me in keeping so laudable a resolution? I want to have your fancy in my cloaths, since they *must* be bought. You may come with safety; I have not seen Mr. Euston a long time. I asked my Lord after him, the other day; and he said, he believed he was indisposed. Come then, my dear, and let me tell you a thousand things which I cannot possibly write.

I am, my dear,
your ever affectionate

C. PERCY.

LETTER LX.

MISS PETWORTH TO MISS PERCY.

I NEVER was more astonished in my life, than at your telling me that Euston was the person dressed like a sultan.

sultah. You must pardon me, my dear, for saying that I cannot believe you. However, if your intelligence should be *authentic*, I must think Euston guilty of a great deal of insolence by the freedom of his behaviour to me; a freedom which naturally attracted every body's attention. If he was known, what could people think when they saw us engaged in so familiar a manner? For *my* part, I had not the least idea of Euston's being in *that* dress, as I had before *certainly* beheld him, and spoke to him in *another*. Had I suspected him of a design to impose upon me, I should, you may be assured, have quitted the room: but there is no being safe from the attacks of men! The world must now imagine that all I have said relating to my own conduct is false, and that a very good correspondence is subsisting between us.

He

MISS PETWORTH. 67

He will absolutely drive me, at last, to marry, against my inclination, the first man of character who asks me the question, that I may shelter myself from any of his future insults. But I waste too much of my time and paper upon him.

I am charmed, my dear Kitty, to hear of your becoming a convert to reason — You will be the happiest of women with Selwyn.

I am very glad you did not mention Mrs. Buller's name, as the mention of it could have been of no service to her ; it must have exposed her, and that would have grieved me exceedingly, as I discovered what she certainly strove to conceal, in an accidental conversation with her. I have since told her of your consent-

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consenting to be Mrs. Selwyn, and that your marriage would soon be solemnized. She wished you all the happiness which you both deserve. I asked her if Mr. Selwyn and she were acquainted. She answered in the negative : adding, however, that she had often seen him, and that she had heard the highest encomiums on his character and behaviour.

We come to town in a day or two; I will then make you a visit, and take a view of all your fine things; though I am of opinion, Kitty, the *man* will be the *best jewel* in your possession. I hope you are, now, of the same.

Yours affectionately,

HEBE PETWORTH.

L E T.

LETTER LXI.

MISS PERCY TO MISS PETWORTH.

I WRITE this in great haste, to let you know that my Lord called this morning on Mr. Euston, who was very much out of order, and told him all that you mentioned concerning him, in your last letter. He replied, that it was his business to submit to your determination against him, however cruel; and that he had nothing to do, but to die, as you remained inexorable.

Poor Euston! Indeed, Hebe, you will repent of this.

My Lord is going to Maple-Park for a few days. He looks pale, I think,
and

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and melancholy. I have questioned him very closely about his health, and he has confessed that not being quite well, he imagines a change of air, and a little exercise, may be of service to him. But he is going alone, that is, only with servants ; with no wife, no friend to take care of him, and to persuade him to take what may be necessary for his recovery. Is it not a strange thing, that my Lady, who was, every body says, in love with him before they married, should discover no concern about him ? especially as he has always behaved in a very kind, obliging manner to her. But this astonishing fondness for play has swallowed up every thing. I could hardly refrain from tears when he owned that he was not well. Seeing my anxiety, he said, pressing my hand. “ You are a “ dear, affectionate girl, Kitty.” Oh, Hebe,

MISS PETWORTH. 71

Hebe, think what I felt at that moment —my full heart was ready to burst with the warmest expressions of gratitude. However, I stifled what I almost died with desire to utter. Luckily for me, my Lord turned away, and left the room, without saying another word.

As soon as he was gone, I sat down, and gave a free vent to my tears. Mr. Selwyn, at that instant, came in, and behaved with so delicate a tenderness, that I could not any longer forbear allowing that he merited the most affectionate of all hearts. He even permitted me to grieve for my Lord ; and I, in return, promised to be his, when my Lord comes back, sufficiently recovered to give me away. I cannot—dare not acquaint you with my every thought upon

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on this trying occasion: but I am, and
ever will be,

yours

C. PERCY.

LETTER LXII.

MISS PETWORTH TO MISS PERCY.

I SHALL come to town to-morrow,
with Mrs. Buller, my dear Kitty, and
call on *you* in the evening.

We are to go to Ranelagh, at the re-
quest of Colonel Fane, and shall be very
glad to have you of the party.

I write this that you may be prepared,
and am, as usual,

yours, &c.

HEBE PETWORTH.

LET.

LETTER LXIV.

MISS PERCY TO MISS PETWORTH.

A GREEABLY to the promise you obliged me to make, last night, I send you my thoughts of Colonel Fane. He is handsome and well-bred, and if you can be content, by marrying *him*, to drive Euston to despair, I do not know any man who would suit you better; but I fancy you don't know so much of him, as you do of Euston, who had only one fault, and has sincerely repented of it. This man, on the other hand, may have half a hundred failings, and may never be in the least concerned about any of them.

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E

I have

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I have gained Mr. Selwyn's opinion of Mrs Buller, by praising her to him. He so readily echoed my encomiums on her, that I really believe he thinks her a very amiable woman. Would he had thought so before he knew *me* ! But what signifies wishing ?

Mrs. Buller behaves with a delicacy, and a propriety which charm me. Had you not told me so, I should not have imagined that Mr. Selwyn was her favourite ; so very decent is her behaviour. I wish I had a quarter of *her* discretion —In short, I almost wish I was in her place ; though I should not, if she really loves in vain, get a great deal by the change. But I will endeavour to think no more of what I ought entirely to forget, and to devote my future sentiments, as well as time, to *him* who will soon have

MISS PETWORTH. 75

have a right to demand an account of them both.

My spirits are exceedingly low at the thoughts of the *approaching day*. Oh! Hebe—say something to reconcile me to a situation for which I shall be envied by half the women in town.

Adieu.

C. PERCY.

In Continuation.

I have opened my letter to tell you that Mr. Euston is dangerously ill of a fever. Mr. Selwyn, calling upon him, was told by the servant, that he has been confined to his bed these two days; and that he *had* been extremely indisposed for some time before.

E 2

My

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My Lord has heard, by John, whom he sent to town for some books, that Mr. Euston is much better.

LETTER LXV.

MISS PETWORTH TO MISS PERCY.

IS Euston really in danger; or do you only tell me so, in order to see what effect such a piece of intelligence will have upon me? Not the effect which you imagine, or desire, believe me. Yet I should be glad to know if he is actually well or ill.

I told Mrs. Buller what you said about Mr. Selwyn's praising her. She made no answer. We are not either of

MISS PETWORTH, 77

us in humour, at present, with any body, and, consequently out of temper with ourselves. You must not, therefore, expect me to assist at your wedding. I am as much out of spirits as you can possibly be; but with the greatest sincerity,

your

HEBE PETWORTH.

LETTER LXVI.

MISS PERCY to MISS PETWORTH.

WHO is a fly girl now, Hebe? How artful was you to get Mrs. Buller to call on me, on purpose to learn how Euston did?

E 3

My

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My Lord, who happened to come to town while she was here, and Mr. Selwyn, both guessed at the occasion of her visit, though they were very glad that any thing could draw her hither. She is a great favourite with us all.

You are very angry with me now, I suppose; and are ready to call me an idly-prating girl, because I say nothing of Euston. My Lord saw him this morning; the doctors have hopes of him, so that you cannot refuse being with me on Saturday, early. I should be glad, indeed, if you could prevail on yourself to oblige me with your company on Friday evening, and sleep with me—Would you could sleep with me always! Do, my dear girl, consider me, a little; pity my situation, and exert all your friendship to relieve me. My
mind

MISS PETWORTH. 79

mind is so agitated, that I hardly know what I do or say.

In Continuation.

Upon looking back, I am frightened at what I have wrote, lest you should be offended, and refuse to come to me. Pray do not abandon me now—Consider I have no mother, no aunt, no sister, no female friend, but *you*. Lady Hampton gives herself no trouble about me; Mrs. Brudenel is too far off, and, indeed, I cannot with her, or even with your amiable Mrs. Buller, take the liberties with which my Hebe once indulged me, who will, I hope, still feel compassion for

her sincere friend,

C. PERCY.

E 4

LET-

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LETTER LXVII.

Miss PETWORTH to Miss PERCY.

I HAVE considered you, Kitty; I do not know whether you deserve my consideration or not: but I will be with you, if nothing particular happens, on Saturday morning early; on no account can I come on Friday evening. Lady Hampton will behave very strangely, indeed, if she does not appear to superintend upon such an occasion. If your guardian's wife does not countenance you upon such an occasion, her behaviour will be very unaccountable.—Surely she *will* be with you. Mrs. Buller begs to be excused; she says, however, that she will wait on you afterwards,

MISS PETWORTH. 81

wards. Tell me now, seriously, Kitty, is Euston really out of danger?—tho' I will not marry him, I would not have him die. I have not leisure to add any more; but I am

dear Kitty's ever faithful friend,

HEBE PETWORTH,

LETTER LXVIII.

MISS PERCY TO MISS PETWORTH.

Friday afternoon.

WE are all in a confusion here.—

Lady Hampton came home, between two or three this morning, extremely indisposed, and her disorder has been increasing ever since. The doctor has just been with her, and declares that

E 5

he

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he does not think she will recover— He says that it was, at first, a violent cold, and that by being neglected it turned to an inflammation upon her lungs. I am frightened out of my senses; my Lord looks strangely; Mr. Selwyn is very serious. You never saw such a house; every thing is disarranged. I tremble all over, while my Lord and Mr. Selwyn, alternately endeavour to administer consolation to me, tho' they both appear to stand, themselves, in the greatest need of it. Yet why, as Mr. Selwyn tells me, should I be so much concerned for a woman who never took any particular notice of me; who always, indeed, treated me with no small indifference, and neglect! It is surely, however, more natural for me to be alarmed about a person of my own sex, the wife of my guardian, than for *him*.

MISS PETWORTH. 83

to be so much disconcerted about her illness. What can induce him to be concerned on Lady Hampton's account? But I am so fluttered, I can hardly hold my pen. I wish you would come to me, and stay with me a little. You cannot, certainly, think, Hebe, my being left alone in the house without any women, except servants, right. Lady Hampton, it is true, seldom sent for me; she only appeared at dinner—sometimes at supper—yet her name was sufficient to countenance my living in the house; but I cannot be admitted in *her* room, on any account—My Lord, himself, has seen her but twice—Hasten then, my dear Hebe, to your ever

faithful friend.

C. PERCY.

E 6

LET.

LETTER LXIX.

MISS PETWORTH TO MRS. BULLER.

I Found poor Kitty, and indeed all the family, as she described them, very much agitated, tho' very differently so.

Lady Hampton was given over.

My Lord looked as if he was deeply engaged in some deep study; as if some very knotty point rivetted his attention.

Mr. Selwyn appeared exceedingly dejected, and Kitty seemed quite wild.

My Lord treated me with extreme politeness, and thanked me in the most obliging

obliging terms for my affectionate behaviour to my young friend.—“She stands
“greatly in need of your assistance, at
“present,” added he.

Mr. Selwyn is a mighty well-bred man, but he is just now not a little embarrassed. He asked me, however, of *you*, while Kitty looked first at my Lord, and then at him. She presses my hand twenty times a day, as she sits by me, and thanks me for coming to be with her. I do not, indeed, see when I shall be able to return to you, my dear Mrs. Bul-
ler; for I really believe that Lady Hampton cannot recover. Miss Percy's marriage must necessarily be postponed, and she begs I would not leave her alone among all the men. 'Tis not, I confess, proper for her to be left without a female friend, as she is *now* situated.

I can

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I can easily account for Mr. Selwyn's being disturbed at the postponing of his marriage, and at Kitty's being disconcerted, from her natural timidity and delicacy—for another reason too—But why should my Lord be so gloomy? He cannot be much grieved at parting with such a wife as my Lady has been for some years. I have heard, indeed, that he was not fond of the match, at first; that he actually married her out of compassion, because she pretended to be dying for him—I should not chuse to be married in *that* way: I should not like to have such a thing said of *me*. Yet why do I talk of myself? I must have a thousand worse things said of me, after the folly of which I have been guilty. I ought, therefore, to be silent. To say truth, I have no leisure to proceed. I
can

MISS PETWORTH. 87

can only add, that I am my dear Mrs.
Buller's

most obliged and affectionate

HEBE PETWORTH.

LETTER LXX.

From the SAME to the SAME.

ALL is over with poor Lady Hamp-
ton. She died last night, and we
seem, tho' we all expected her death, to
be in very great consternation. My Lord,
who was with her almost an hour before
she died, appears to be greatly affected :
and Kitty, tho' she saw her not after she
was given over, was so much shocked up-
on the melancholy occasion, that she
fainted away. Mr. Selwyn was extremely
affiduous

assiduous about her, but retired soon. He has not been here yet to-day. He is greatly chagrined, I suppose, to find his marriage put off—I should have thought that Kitty would be glad of it; but she appears quite distressed: and her spirits are sunk so low, that it is impossible for me to say or do any thing to raise them. My Lord, notwithstanding his (apparent) concern, is politely attentive to us both. He tells *me*, that he is very sorry he is indebted to so melancholy an event for the pleasure of my society, and says a thousand kind things to Kitty, who sighs, blushes, and looks so unhappy, yet so handsome at the same time, and discovers so affectionate a regard for her guardian, that I do not know where it would end, if my Lord was as tenderly touched as she, to all appearance, is. He thinks, however, that *I* am so touched,

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P.

MISS PETWORTH. 89

ed, or he would not take so much pains to set out Euston's disorder in the most lively colours, and dwell upon every particular relating to his behaviour under it. He often tells me, indeed, that he is better, but informs me also that he thinks his recovery is very doubtful: that it depends entirely upon the restoration of his mind's peace.

I thank you for your letter, my dear friend. I cannot help smiling at Col. Fane's earnestness on my account; but I shall only send him compliments, in return for all he has told you concerning me.

I am ever
your obliged, &c.

HEBE PETWORTH.

P. S. My best respects wait on my good Mr. Edwards.

L E T.

LETTER. LXXI.

Mr. SELWYN to Lord HAMPTON.

YOUR present melancholy situation, my dear Hampton, makes it difficult for me to find an opportunity to open my heart to you; and I cannot, with any propriety, do it in an abrupt and indigested manner. I have much, however, to say to you, and I think it better to communicate what I want to say in *this* way, than by a verbal disclosure. You will, it is probable, by this mode of proceeding, be neither embarrassed, hurried, nor disturbed; as you may look over my thoughts at your leisure, lay down my letter, if weary or inter-

MISS PETWORTH. 91

interrupted, and take it up again when it is most agreeable to you. When you have thoroughly considered the contents of my letter, you may, at your leisure, reply to it. I shall say little to you upon the subject which must, necessarily, engage your attention at present. You are now at liberty to live as you like; and may, in a decent time, chuse a lady for your wife, every way suitable to you, and I hope you will, with *her*, enjoy many years of felicity. As to myself, this sudden, and melancholy event has put off my marriage with Miss Percy—it *must* be retarded for some time: I believe indeed, it will be never consummated. Yet do not imagine that I am in the least changed, with regard to the amiable Miss Percy—I still admire her: I could still fondly love her; but how can I rationally expect happiness with a woman who feels

not

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not the least degree of tenderness for me; who secretly rejoices at my disappointment, and earnestly wishes I would give her up entirely, as she has long fixed upon another, *now* at liberty to encourage her to hope that her affection may be returned? Since this is the true state of the case, would you not think me mad to marry such a woman, even supposing her person and manners to be thoroughly engaging as they really are? I must, therefore, give up all farther connections with Miss Percy; at least till I know whether there is a probability of her being happy with the man of her choice. I dare say that you have too sincere a regard for her, to solicit her to do any thing which is not agreeable to her. You will neither expect nor desire her to marry a man whom she cannot love, but freely consent to her
being

being settled in the way most likely to contribute to her happiness. I will not pretend to say that I can resign all the hopes I had at first formed, without much regret. Tho' I soon found that the lady's heart was pre-engaged, I continued to hope that time, and my attentions to gain it, might have succeeded; especially as the man whom she preferred, was married, and had no reason to expect a speedy release from his engagement. However, since the dissolution of that engagement has unexpectedly happened, *her* lost hopes, must necessarily revive, and she cannot think of *me*, but with the greatest detestation; as a marriage with me would have forever excluded any farther expectations of felicity with him whom she would have chosen. Shall I not therefore act wisely,

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wisely, and give the strongest proof of my esteem, my affection for Miss Percy, by resigning her; and not only wishing her success with my rival, but also doing every thing in my power to promote an union between them? Yet I submit this to your Lordship's consideration. When you have sufficiently reflected upon what I have said, you will oblige me by the communication of your intentions, as they will in a great measure, determine the conduct of

your faithful

JOHN SELWYN.

LET.

LETTER LXXII.

MISS PETWORTH to Mrs. BULLER.

I Hope I shall now soon have the pleasure of returning back to you. My Lord has been very thoughtful of late, and his thoughts have, I imagine, turned chiefly upon Miss Percy, to whom he is particularly attentive; he is observing of her, I should rather say. He has watched her very closely for these last two or three days: he has said little to her hitherto, indeed; yet what he *has* uttered, has been pronounced in accents unusually soft and soothing: and they have so great an effect upon poor Kitty, that she is almost lost in looking on him,

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him, and listening to him. She certainly, never will be able to think of marrying Selwyn, all amiable as he is, after this.

My Lord said to her, yesterday—taking her hand in his—“ Would it not
“ be agreeable to you to go for a little
“ while to Mrs. Brudenel’s? I am sure
“ she will be very happy to have you
“ with her; and as this house will be
“ but a melancholy place, for some
“ time, I should think my dear Kitty,
“ you would prefer such a change your-
“ self just now.”

Kitty sighed, and smiled, and curtsied, and coloured; she seemed loth to go, and yet seemed unable to refuse him any thing.

Finding

MISS PETWORTH. 97

Finding that she could not speak for herself, my Lord made an answer for her, and concluding that she would go, said—"I can trust to Mrs. Brudenel's care of you." Then turning to *me*, added—"Mrs. Brudenel will also be exceedingly entertained with *your* conversation, Miss Petworth, and it will be a great relief to Miss Percy."

I thanked him for his civility, but declined accepting of it, you may be sure, on many accounts.

I begin *not* to wonder at Kitty's liking this Man: he has a most insinuating way with him; and yet I do not remember to have seen him once endeavour to render himself particularly pleasing to her: he is the more likely, perhaps, to succeed. I will allow, tho'

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a woman, that we have caprices sometimes : you will undoubtedly ascribe my persisting to refuse a reconciliation with Euston, to my capriciousness, because you are certain that I prefer him in my heart to every man in the world. Do our friends, then, know more of our minds than we ourselves do in such cases ? I see you look arch now, and were I near you, I should most probably, hear you answer—" Yes."

Oh, my dear Mrs. Buller ! would I had ever been as discreet as you are ! Very disquieting reflections *will* sometimes force themselves into my mind : and I believe it is better that such reflections *should* find a passage into it—Were I not chastised by *them*, I might be again committing imprudences.

When

MISS PETWORTH. 99

When Miss Percy removes to Mrs. Brudenel's, my good Mr. Edwards, and *you*, madam, will be again troubled with
your most affectionate

HEBE PETWORTH.

LETTER LXXIII.

LORD HAMPTON to Mr. SELWYN.

I Read your letter several times over, my dear Selwyn, before I could give myself leave to credit some parts of the contents. Your being so ready to resign Miss Percy must appear, you will allow, I hope, astonishing to me: but *her* being so much prepos-
sessed in favour of another, is still more surprising. That she discovered a little
F 2 repug-

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repugnance at receiving your addresses, I very well remember ; but as I imagined that it arose from the timidity and delicacy, of a modest, well-educated girl upon such an occasion, I rather admired than blamed her for it. 'Tis certainly best, Selwyn, for young women to be rather too backward, than forward ; but I never in the least supposed that she had any other attachment ; and she must have conducted herself with uncommon prudence to conceal it so thoroughly. Yet I do not think *that* concealment any proof of the confidence I could have wished her to place in me. And why she chose to trust *you* with the secret rather than *me*, I cannot conceive. Having been appointed by her father to take care of her, and to see her happily disposed of, I was, I think, a proper person to be trusted with *such* a secret :

MISS PETWORTH. FOR

secret: and as I have never made use of the least severity in my behaviour to her, it is still more strange that she should not have disclosed it to me. If she has placed her affections upon a person worthy of her, she shall have all due encouragement. If you firmly believe that her heart is pre-engaged, you are certainly right in resigning her — Let me know, therefore, my dear Selwyn, who the man is that has made a conquest of so charming a heart: there is not a woman in the world, in my opinion, of a more amiable disposition. Willing to execute, in the best manner I could, the great trust reposed in me by her father; willing also to save so fine a girl from falling into the hands of a person totally undeserving of her, I wished the more earnestly to see her united to a man of your excellent sentiments;

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especially as I believed you were formed to render each other happy. Very sorry am I to find myself disappointed; but since it is so, let me hear who this fortunate man is, that I may compleat her felicity with him, if he is worthy of her. For *my* part, I have ever yet found so much satisfaction arising from communicating pleasure to other people, that I have little leisure to attend to my own. I do not expect to be happier than I am at present. There is no situation in life of which I have so high an idea as that of a domestic one, with the woman of my choice, but as I never have been so lucky as to obtain so great a blessing, and as I believe that I am now entirely out of the way of such a blessing, I must endeavour to increase my natural apathy to a much higher

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higher degree, as I find stoicism, in some measure, necessary to my happiness. I am still, however,

yours most sincerely,

HAMPTON.

LETTER LXXIV.

MISS PERCY TO MISS PETWORTH.

WHERE are you, my dear Hebe? How much do I lament our separation! How cruelly am I torn, at once, from every thing I love! Mrs. Brudenel is extremely polite, but I know not how to support the thoughts of being removed from the house in which I have lived so happily—to which I never, never must return. You cannot conceive what I felt when you left me, what

F 4

I suf-

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I suffered when my Lord put me into Mrs. Brudenel's coach, and bade me adieu. I have been here two whole days, and he has neither made me a visit, nor sent to enquire after me. Mr. Selwyn has called ; he staid with me some time. I was even rejoiced to see him, because I thought he could tell me something about my Lord : but he said he had not seen him. To be sure, when I began to reflect seriously, I recollected that my Lord cannot go abroad while my Lady lies unburied : it is strange, however, that Mr. Selwyn should not call on him. I fancied he did not appear pleased, either with *me* or Mrs. Brudenel ; he was very polite to us both ; but he seemed, I imagined, in a hurry to leave us, and glad to be gone. My spirits were greatly depressed before, and they were not at all raised by any thing Mr. Selwyn said.

I asked

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I asked him, several times, after my Lord: so often, indeed, that he looked as if he thought me particularly inquisitive. I was disconcerted by his looks, and made the silliest apology for my being so, you ever heard. I am become, indeed, quite weak; I never felt so oddly in my life: yet I strove to recover myself, and remembered, in the midst of my confusion, to ask after Mr. Euston. He told me, that his fever had quite left him: but that he was too feeble and low-spirited to give his friends any hopes of a speedy re-establishment of his health.

Mrs. Brudenel, my dear Hebe, and I, shall be very happy to see you here. I flattered myself, indeed, that you would have, ere now, called on

your very affectionate

C. PERCY.

F. 5.

LET.

LETTER LXXV.

Mr. SELWYN to Lord HAMPTON.

I Thought, my Lord, you could not but be indulgent to the amiable Percy; but is it not astonishing, that you should not have discovered yourself to be the man she loves, to be the first choice of her heart? While there was no probability of her marrying *you*, I concealed this discovery of a prior inclination, hoping to wean her from the man whom she could not marry, by all the tenderness which my heart felt for her, from my first knowledge of the sweetness of her temper, the modesty of her manners, and the delicacy of her sentiments: and I began to flatter myself,

self, that though I could not boast of having drawn away her affection from *you*, I should be able to secure her esteem; not without hopes, also, that her esteem might be, by time, and a train of assiduities, ripened into love. While I was feeding myself with delusive hopes, *you*, my Lord, unexpectedly, became at liberty to dispose of your hand. That event necessarily deferred my marriage with Miss Percy, and threw her into an agitation, which made me tremble for her happiness: for though there was not an absolute certainty of her *now* having the man whom she preferred, there was *now* a possibility of her having him, and the thoughts of her being on the point of destroying all her fond expectations, by marrying *me*, pained her, I plainly perceived, exceedingly. Could I see her pained, without wishing to re-

lieve her? Can I be said to have a true regard for her, if I do not endeavour to render her completely happy with the man whom she most tenderly loves? Besides, what felicity can I expect with a woman whose heart is entirely devoted to a man who is every way deserving of her, and who cannot be insensible of her great merit? However, till you determine whether you really can love Miss Percy sufficiently to make her perfectly happy, I shall not withdraw my pretensions.

Waiting impatiently for an answer to this, I remain,

your Lordship's most faithful friend,
and obliged humble servant,

J. SELWYN.

L E T.

LETTER LXXVI.

LORD HAMPTON TO JOHN SELWYN, Esq.

SELWYN, my dear Selwyn, have you told me the truth? Is it possible that the amiable Kitty actually prefers *me* to you? to every man? Does she really love *me*?—Does she wish to be *mine*? Does this dear girl, with whose elegant figure, with whose delicate taste, with whose enchanting simplicity of manners, I was so touched on our first acquaintance; who filled my whole soul with an inexpressible tenderness—a tenderness, which I kept down, because I dared not to indulge it, circumstanced as I was—can *she* prefer *me* to every other man in the world? Circumstanced as I was,
I dreaded

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I dreaded the discovery of my feelings on her account, and wished, therefore, to remove her for ever from me, by disposing of her: but in a manner which would, I thought, ensure her happiness. In order to dispose of her in that manner, I naturally, my Selwyn, thought of *you*, my best friend, with whose merit I was sufficiently acquainted. Well am I now convinced that I was not mistaken; since you can generously deprive yourself of happiness to promote the felicity of the woman you love, to promote the felicity of your friend with *her*—with the charming Kitty Percy. As *her* gentle heart is interested in my favour, I cannot but be happy with her; and I will venture to assure you that I have not ever yet been thoroughly so. Lady Hampton was, indeed, young and handsome, and she was possessed of a considerable fortune,

MISS PETWORTH. III

tune, but she was not the woman I should have chosen: yet as I had no particular attachment at that time, and as she did me the honour to take a fancy to me, I could not, with any degree of prudence or good-nature, slight the application made to me, on *her* side; especially, as she had not discovered the unhappy propensity, which afterwards rendered her by no means a desirable companion. What felicity, then, must I enjoy with a woman of so different a disposition; a woman who loves me as much as Lady Hampton ever could have loved me; as her passion was momentary, and expired soon after her marriage with me. But you, my friend, are not the man to whom I should vent the effusions of my enraptured heart. I should, in consideration of that friendship which prompted you to make me

so blest, spare you the recital of my transports. I shall also spare my gentle Kitty, as I think, I am too well acquainted with *her* delicacy, to believe that she could bear to hear me upon this subject, while the death of Lady Hampton must, at present, call up some melancholy ideas in her mind. I cannot, indeed, think of overpowering the poor girl, either with surprise or joy; but when you have declined the ratification of your engagements with her, I will gradually make a change in my behaviour to her, of the preparatory kind, and give her room to expect the final accomplishment of her wishes, without throwing her spirits into a state of too much flutter.

Let me hear from you again, therefore, with all convenient expedition.
May

MISS PETWORTH. 113

May you ever be as happy with another
fair one, as you have made

your sincere and affectionate

HAMPTON.

LETTER LXXVII.

EDWARD EUSTON, Esq. to
SIR WALTER CAREY, Bart.

I AM, at last, so far recovered as to
be able with my pen to thank you
for your many friendly enquiries after
me. I have also had other enquiries,
though not direct ones. Lord Hampton
and Mr. Selwyn both inform me, that
Miss Petworth has discovered, in spite
of all her efforts to conceal it, the great-
est anxiety and disquiet on *my* account.
These gentlemen have acted like real
friends

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friends with regard to me; they have, it is true, freely condemned the indelicacy of my conduct, but they have also candidly made all reasonable allowance for it, by considering the greatness of the temptation; by considering that no man ever had a more inviting opportunity to try the virtue of the woman he intended to marry. That I fully intended to marry Miss Petworth, is surely beyond a doubt. I have ever since been solicitous for an union with her, and her resentful behaviour almost brought me to the grave. Yes, Carey; her continued opposition to a reconciliation, actually endangered my life. She still, indeed, obstinately persists in refusing to seal my pardon; yet as I have the strongest proofs of her preferring *me* to every other man, I will pursue her to the end of the world. She shall always have me

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MISS PETWORTH. 115

in her view, that she may, should she be tempted to listen to any other man, unavoidably behold my haggard looks, tottering limbs, and emaciated carcase. My melancholy appearance, if it does not reproach her for her cruelty, will at least convince her, that however I have conducted myself towards her, I have always loved her too sincerely to be happy, or even to enjoy the smallest degree of health, without her. You must not now, therefore, expect me at your *place* this summer: but wherever I am, you may depend upon my remaining

yours most affectionately,

E. EUSTON,

L E T.

LETTER LXXVIII.

MR. SELWYN TO LORD HAMPTON.

WITH all possible haste I dispatch this, to acquaint you with the result of my interview with Miss Percy.

I went pretty early in the afternoon, that I might have the fairer chance of finding her at home, alone: that is, without a crowd of company. I so well timed my visit, as to meet with her sitting only with Mrs. Brudenel, who, after a little common chit-chat exchanged between us, made an apology for being obliged to go out, and left me with the amiable Kitty.

I then

MISS PETWORTH. 117

I then designed to open a conversation which would, I thought, naturally lead to the subject so very interesting to me; but found myself unable to expatiate upon it. I will even honestly confess, that I began, at the sight of the dear girl, with her beautiful blushes, graceful attitudes, and agitated spirits, almost to repent of what I had promised, and secretly blamed myself for having been too busy: but a moment's recollection convinced me that the very agitation by which I was affected, proceeded most probably, from my having made advances disagreeable to her, and induced me to believe, that by withdrawing my addresses I should give her immediate relief.

Influenced by this idea, I roused myself from the pleasing lethargy into
which

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which I was sinking, and resolved to pursue my design—She very soon gave me an opportunity to carry it into execution, by asking, with a faint voice and a glowing cheek, if I had seen you lately, and how you did?

I told her, you were very well.

“I am glad of it,” replied she, making an effort to recover her spirits, a little—“I am glad my Lord is well.—“Such a shock sometimes produces an illness.”

“My Lord,” answered I, “tho’ he was certainly concerned, could not have been so much shocked, as he would have been, had he felt a tender attachment to my Lady.”

“Ah!

MISS PETWORTH. 119

"Ah!" replied the poor girl; with a short fetched sigh, "'tis a sad thing to marry, where we cannot love."

Instantly imagining that she had gone too far, she strove to recall her words, by adding, in a faltering voice, "I do not mean that my Lord had no affection for my Lady, but I—but I—"

"I understand you perfectly, my dear Miss Percy," said I, taking her hand in mine—"sit down, however and be composed; it is upon this very subject I am come to talk with you."

She complied; tho' she actually looked, at the same time, frightened, and begged me still more with her expressive

five eyes than with her silver tongue,
to tell her what I meant.

“ I mean nothing,” said I, “ but to
“ behave in a manner quite agreeable to
“ you ; and I hope you will answer,
“ with the greatest sincerity, the ques-
“ tion I am going to propose to you,
“ without giving yourself any concern
“ about *my* feelings. Would you not
“ be glad, Miss Percy, to find me, in
“ consequence of seeing no probability
“ of making the wished-for impresson
“ upon your heart ; would you not be
“ rejoiced at my relinquishing all pre-
“ tensions to it ?”

“ Mr. Selwyn,” replied she, looking at
me with her pretty eyes wide open,
astonished—“ Are you serious ?”

“ I am, upon my honour, madam : if
“ you wish me to be so.”

“ That

MISS PETWORTH. 321

"That I have long wished you to be
"so," answered she, casting her eyes
down, "is but a poor compliment to
"you, Sir; but I fancy it is for *your*
"interest, as well as mine, to be sincere
"upon this occasion. I will allow you
"to have all the requisites to please,
"and I have the highest esteem for you;
"yet I fear I shall never feel any pas-
"sion except esteem for you."

"I am sure then," Miss Percy, re-
plied I, "that your esteem ought to
"satisfy me. I ought not to prosecute
"you any longer for what it is not in
"your power, if I may believe you, to
"bestow upon me."

"You may indeed believe me, my
"dear Mr. Selwyn," said she, in a kind
of half-suppressed transport; for her eyes

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sparkled, her cheeks were flushed, and her whole frame trembled—"I have often wished I could return the affection, which you certainly deserve; but really it has never been in my power—and if you knew," continued the dear, innocent creature, with all that beautiful simplicity of manners, with all that sincerity of heart, with all that frankness which nobly disdains every species of deception, "if you knew what pains I have taken to be every thing you desire, you would be sensible, that want of power only, and not want of inclination, prevented me."

"I am satisfied—I am convinced, my dear Miss Percy," answered I, "of the excellence of your disposition, which urges you to treat every person with the greatest consideration; and

MISS PETWORTH. 123

“ and as I have ever studied to please
“ you, tho’ I have not been fortunate
“ enough to meet with success, I can-
“ not doubt of your compassion in re-
“ turn—Be assured therefore, dear Ma-
“ dam, from hence forward, that I will
“ not ask any thing farther of you, than
“ your friendship, and a continuance of
“ that regard with which you have hi-
“ therto honoured me, as long as I shall
“ continue to deserve it.”

She bowed, and thanked me for the determination I had made with respect to *her*: declaring, while her eyes glistened with pleasure, that it was exceedingly agreeable to her.

I returned a slight answer, to that speech: it required no other, and my

G 2

heart,

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heart, indeed, was too full to let me return any other: it was the last pang I felt at giving up the most perfect creature—in *my* partial eyes—in the world—I turned the conversation immediately, and she entered into it with an ease and a vivacity, which I had never observed in her before, and which did not at all tend to render me more satisfied with my *resignation*.

When I left her, she thanked me again for my obliging visit, and desired her respectful compliments to your Lordship.

With what an angel will you be blest, my Lord! while I—but I must banish, if possible, recollection. I must, at least, only endeavour to contribute to the felicity of the most amiable of women,

MISS PETWORTH. 125
men, with the most valuable of my
friends.

I am, my dear Lord,
your ever faithful
J. SELWYN.

LETTER LXXIX.

MISS PERCY TO MISS PETWORTH.

THE most agreeable turn of fortune
in the world has happened to your
friend, my Hebe. Mr. Selwyn has
made me the kindest visit, and has
given up all pretensions to me. I shall
not now be so unhappy as I have been :
as I shall not now have my duty,
and my inclination at variance. I am
now at liberty to prefer Lord Hamp-

ton to all the men in the world. *He is not married, Hebe, and I am not engaged.*

In Continuation.

He has been here—my Lord has been here : he is just gone ; he was never so agreeable, he never looked half so handsome, he never conversed in half so pleasing a manner. At his first entrance there was a decency in his looks, and whole behaviour, which excited my sincerest compassion, and that compassion was soon succeeded by the most delightful sensations. When we had talked a little about the occurrences which had fallen under the notice of us both, during our absence, I had the sweet satisfaction to find that they had been as disagreeable to *him* as they had been to *me*. He told me so, and

and I very readily believed him. In return, I communicated the welcome intelligence I had lately received from Mr. Selwyn, and it met, I thought, with a most favourable reception. He smiled with an inexpressible complacency on me, and asked me what charm his friend wanted to captivate my heart? I answered, that I should ever be ready to allow Mr. Selwyn all the merit to which he was entitled, but that he had no attraction in *my* eyes.

“I must think then,” replied he, “that they are prepossessed in favour of another;” giving me, at the same time, Hebe, a scrutinizing look, which went to the very bottom of my heart.

I felt my face glow like fire—I was quite abashed, while he held my hand and

pressed it gently between his, not daring to lift up my eyes for several moments. When I *could* raise them, I found *his* still fixed on me, in so earnest a manner, that they produced sensations in me which I cannot describe. Besides, I trembled to such a degree, lest he should discover the cause of those sensations, that I believe he, out of mere pity, refrained from asking me any more questions of the same nature. He entered, however, into the most enchanting conversation upon a variety of entertaining subjects, and by so doing, made the hours fly away with the greatest rapidity.

On his looking, at last, at his watch, I was very much surprised at its being so late; and as Mrs. Brudenel was not
at

at home to pay him the compliment, I ventured to ask him to stay.

He really appeared loth to leave me, but I could not prevail on him to give me his company any longer; yet he actually sighed when he bade me adieu; pressed my hand again still more affectionately, called me his dear Kitty, and promised to see me again very soon. "Where, indeed," added he, "can I pass my time so delightfully, as with my amiable Miss Percy?"

Only think, Hebe, what I felt at hearing him talk in this way! I was quite intoxicated with pleasure—I am afraid, my dear good girl, that I forgot all your charming, discreet lessons: I certainly felt emotions which could not be concealed from him; I had such a

palpitation at my heart--if he *did* see it, he was so considerate as to say nothing to increase my confusion; and he gave me another kind look at parting, which I recollected with the highest pleasure all the remainder of the evening.

I now fancy I am beginning to be happy: yet I only entertain such a conjecture, as Mr. Selwyn will no longer ask me to love him, and as Lord Hampton desires not that I should—(at least, I think he does not)—From thence arises the greatest satisfaction at present enjoyed by

your ever affectionate

C. PERCY.

L E T.

LETTER LXXX.

Lord HAMPTON to Mr. SBLWYN.

I Have been to see my dear Kitty, and I have discovered, at least I imagine I have discovered, a thousand symptoms of that inclination, that flattering inclination, which you mention. I cannot be mistaken—she *must* love—I cannot so far deceive myself—I have seen the strongest marks of the tender passion: that passion languishes in her eyes, trembles in her hand, and falters on her tongue. What an exquisite felicity, to be loved by such a charming creature! How intolerably stupid was I not to see it before! tho' the discovery of it, indeed,

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would

would have been *then* to no purpose, as I had it not in my power to make a proper return. My discovery of it indeed, at that time, might have been attended with the most disagreeable consequences, as I do not think I could have kept myself long within the frigid bounds which decency, fettered as I was, demanded. To have seen an amiable girl continually before me, loving me well enough to prefer me to all her admirers; to have seen that enchanting preference discovered in every look, word, and action; and to have felt myself not at liberty to confess what I saw, to make the wished-for return, the return justly deserved—and even now, Selwyn, I must not proceed too fast, she is too delicate to be hurried. I pitied most sincerely the agitation into which the unexpected sight of me threw her, and hastened to
relieve

MISS PETWORTH. 133.

relieve her; for tho' I said nothing of my love, I could not help behaving with a softness in my manner, sufficient, I hoped, not only to be particularly agreeable, but to prepare her also for a more tender carriage. I love her too well, Selwyn, to have her suddenly alarmed, or affected even with what would, I now believe, afford her pleasure, lest her health should be injured. She is altogether the right sort of woman to make me happy; I cannot be too careful of her, both on *her* account and on my own. Really, Selwyn, I never think of your relinquishing this delightful girl to *me*, without being astonished at your greatness of mind. I am afraid I could not have brought myself to act in so disinterested a manner. When I reflect on her merit, I consider it as inestimable: what I chiefly admire in her, what I

most

most esteem, are her excessive modesty, and the strict propriety of her conduct, which obliged her to suppress entirely her sensations in my favour, as they might, had she discovered them, have raised tumults in my transported bosom, violent enough to have prompted me to be guilty of some very capital indiscretion, and that indiscretion might have plunged *her* into the deepest misery. What uncommon prudence in an innocent, untutored girl : a girl unacquainted with the ways of the world, and yet so artful, as to be able to conceal every prepossession in my favour ! I certainly *did* perceive in her a great partiality to my opinions, a ready acquiescence, with a perfect submission to what I deemed fittest for her ; but her acquiescence and submissions proceeded, I thought, entirely from her reliance on my care, and from a firm belief

MISS PETWORTH. 135

belief that I would execute my trust to the best of my judgment, and not from any sort of predilection for *me*. How amiable, how excellent is such a character! especially at a time when women take more unwarrantable liberties than ever. How very pleasing are now the prospects of

your sincere friend,

HAMPTON!

L É T T E R LXXXI..

MISS PETWORTH to MISS PERCY.

IT is not in my power to say any thing to increase the joy you seem to feel at the getting rid of so estimable a lover as Mr. Selwyn. The satisfaction you feel upon this occasion, arises, I imagine,

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imagine, in a great measure, from your having hopes of another, still more desirable to you in his room. Indeed, Kitty, young, and unskilled as you appear, you have conducted this business with the dexterity of an experienced woman of the world; and have managed matters with so much address, as to make the dismissal of Selwyn pave the way for the reception of my Lord. Few of the greatest adepts among our sex, in the art of love, could have contrived things more to the purpose. But I have very little leisure to expatiate upon the subject in question, or upon your happy manner of treating it, as Mrs. Buller, Mr. Edwards, and Colonel Fane, are all waiting for me to accompany them to Peterham; to which place, I beg your next may be directed, for

your unvariable

HEBE PETWORTH.

L E T

LETTER LXXXII.

MISS PERCY TO MISS PETWORTH.

I Should be almost angry with you, my dear Hebe, were it possible for me to be angry with any body, or any thing, at present, for going out of town without calling on me first, especially as I am here in a strange house. Was this like my Hebe? But I am so happy with my Lord; that is, I mean, in his company—He now comes to see me every day, either to drink tea with me in an afternoon, or to call on me in a morning. He stays with me, in a morning, generally two or three hours; sometimes he walks with me in Hyde-Park; some-

sometimes goes airing with me in Mrs. Brudenel's coach.

We went to Christie's, t'other day: there was an auction of plate, china, and trinkets. Happening to admire a very elegant pocket-book, my Lord, bid for it, and presented it to me. You cannot think how delighted I was. However, I have something of a still more interesting nature to tell you. He came last night, altogether unexpectedly, as he had called in the morning, though he only made a short visit. Not having any idea of his coming again in the evening, I had dressed myself, in order to accompany Mrs. Brudenel to some of her friends, but the entrance of my Lord immediately determined me to stay at home.

"You

"You are going out, ladies, I see," said his Lordship.

"Mrs. Brudenel is going," answered I, "and I *was* going with her; but I shall remain where I am, now."

"I beg I may not hinder you," said he, taking hold of both my hands, and giving me one of his inexpressible looks; "You appear so handsome, it will be a pity to keep you at home, and to hinder the world from seeing you—consequently, of admiring you."

How my face glowed, Hebe! I looked down, I was so ashamed: but I was also extremely pleased, and was resolved to shew my gratitude by staying with him, at all events; and, indeed, Mrs. Brudenel told me, immediately, that she
would

would very readily release me from my promise, if it would be more agreeable to me to remain in the place I was.

I thanked her.

My Lord said, with a look which strongly denoted satisfaction, "I am obliged to Mrs. Brudenel for sparing Miss Percy." Then turning to me, and taking my hand, added, "But ought I not to make a conscience of your breaking your word?"

"I place so much confidence in your Lordship," replied I, "that I do not believe you will ever be the cause of my doing any thing which should not be done."

He pressed my hand to his bosom, looked upon me with the most affectionate

MISS PETWORTH. 141

nate air, and said something softly to himself.

My whole frame trembled with delight. I was, indeed, afraid to lift up my eyes to him, while he sat hanging over me, lest they should say too much. I do not mean that they could have possibly expressed more than I felt, but I was fearful of discovering more than I ought.

While I was considering how I should look, he still more embarrassed me ; but in the sweetest manner imaginable.

Taking a little shagreen case out of his pocket, he said, " As you have done
" me the favour to accept of such a
" trifle as a pocket-book, will you give
" me

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“me leave, Miss Percy, to present you
“with something which may be more ac-
“ceptable to you?”

I took it with trembling hands—
When I perceived, upon opening it, his
charming picture, I thought I should
have let it drop, so great was my sur-
prise, so great was my joy. I was so
much surprised, and so much delighted,
that I did not at first observe the picture
was ornamented with very fine bril-
liants.

I looked, as I am sure I felt, quite
disconcerted. I wished to say that the
portrait was a thousand times more va-
luable than the frame, but I was afraid
of saying more than was proper. After
a little hesitation, I recovered myself
sufficiently to return him thanks: ad-
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MISS PETWORTH. 143

ding, that I should have considered his present as the most valuable gift in the world, without its magnificent decorations.

He replied, "I only wish it could
"have been rendered more worthy of
"your acceptance, by an additional
"number of jewels; but I was so im-
"patient to make you sensible of the in-
"finite esteem and tenderness I feel for
"you, that I could not, any longer,
"restrain myself from offering you what,
"I fondly hoped, would be favourably
"received."

Imagine my sensations, my Hebe.
They were beyond all description; and
so, I believe, were my acknowledgments;
for my Lord, catching my hand, kissed
it, actually kissed it, and with such eager-
ness,

ness, that though I was transported with it, I was, at the same time, extremely fluttered by it. I was quite overcome—I never felt myself so violently agitated before.

He saw my agitation, and immediately strove to relieve me, by saying a thousand soothing things; kindly attributing the cause of my sudden disorder to the heat of the room. He took up my fan, which I had brought down, as I was full dressed to go out, to cool me.

I was almost intoxicated with his attentions about me; yet I was abashed at first; but he had so gentle, so insinuating a manner of behaving, that he very soon, some how, made me as much satisfied with myself, as I had been with *him*, and I became more easy, and more assured

assured than I had yet been. How extensive are his powers of pleasing ! Surely no man ever had half so many ! Surely no man has half so much sense, so much sweetness of temper, so many graces in his person, so many allurements in his behaviour !—But how I run on !—You will think me mad—My head, indeed, has been so giddy, that I forgot to tell you poor Mr. Selwyn is very much indisposed. I am really sorry, and so I told my Lord, who goes to see him every day. My Lord also asked me how my charming friend did, and said, that Mr. Euston, who is got abroad again, was almost distracted lest you should marry Colonel Fane. I replied, that I could not tell what you would do ; adding, that I believed you did not know yourself. If you think, therefore, that I have given you a bad character, you must acquaint me with your designs, by way of vindica-

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tion. Be assured, at the same time, that
you will never have a sincerer friend than
your affectionate

C. PERCY.

LETTER LXXXIII.

Miss PETWORTH to Miss PERCY.

WHAT a little *giddy-head* are you
grown! a spoilt child, indeed,
Miss Percy. This Lord Hampton, I
see what he is about, will make one of
the finest girls in the world just good
for nothing; and then he will have a
second lady who will be no better than
his first. What a present has he made
you! I would have given the world to
have seen how that little innocent face
of yours looked; that face which never
yet could disguise a single emotion felt
by

MISS PETWORTH. 147

by the sincerest of all hearts. My Lord must certainly be transported with you—No wonder poor Selwyn is sick—he has behaved nobly. Pray heaven send him a good wife to make him amends; a wife as amiable as *you*, my dear, a woman who may be inclined to love him a little better than you did.

As to Euston's distraction about Colonel Fane, it is exceedingly idle; he cannot have any thing to do with *my* marriage, and he will, by pretending to interfere with it, only increase the mischief he has already done me.

Pray let me know, when you write next, more particulars relating to Mr. Selwyn, and you will oblige

your affectionate

HEBE PETWORTH.

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LETTER LXXXIV.

MISS PERCY TO MISS PETWORTH.

HEBE—Hebe—I am now the happiest of women! my Lord has declared that he loves me beyond expression, and that he really never loved any woman before. What felicity! It was almost too much for your poor friend, the *little giddy-head* as you call her!—My Lord had kindly, indeed, prepared me for the declaration he was going to make, but my spirits were so much agitated when *he did* make it, that he blamed himself exceedingly for having been so precipitate. He knelt at my feet, and kissed my hands, alternately, intreating

intreating me, at the same time, to pardon him, for the intemperate effusions which his excessive tenderness had occasioned.

Would you believe it, Hebe? I suffered him to continue in that attitude, without thinking of desiring him to rise, so much was I lost in pleasure. I looked on him, but I could not speak for some moments—When I could bring out any words, I made as many apologies, on *my* part, for a behaviour that had made me appear very awkward in my own eyes.

He then rose, and said so many tender, so many flattering things, that I was not capable of concealing, any longer, my sentiments in his favour; tho' indeed my looks had sufficiently revealed them

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before. I told him, my Hebe, I told him honestly, that he had, by the declaration of his love, given my heart a sincere joy—in short, I could not refrain from telling him that *he* was the only man in the world who could make me happy; and that I was amply repaid, by the transports he discovered at finding me so truly attached to him. He has now confessed that he admired and loved me from our first acquaintance, and that it was with great difficulty he suppressed a passion, the discovery of which *might have hurt me, and must have injured him*, circumstanced as he then was.

I as freely confessed, tho' I was covered with blushes while I spoke, that I had scarcely been able to forbear indulging too great an affection for him, even when it was criminal to think of
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MISS PETWORTH. 151

him in that manner: but I afterwards checked myself, lest he should imagine me to be too forward, though, indeed, I am not, I never was, a forward girl, you know, Hebe. It is, however, a difficult matter for a woman to express her affection for the man she loves, without being thought either too warm or too cool; it is certainly most commendable to be rather too cool; but when an amiable and truly esteemed lover tenderly complains of her want of affection, how hard, how very hard, is it to assume an indifference which we do not, cannot, and perhaps ought not, to feel! I may, indeed, have too much sensibility, as well as too little, yet I do not wish to alter my sentiments, with regard to my Lord, who will never, I dare say, take an improper advantage of my tenderness.

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How I long to see you, my dear Hebe, to tell you a thousand things which I cannot possibly write—let me not forget, however, to add, that Mr. Selwyn is better than he has been, but he looks very pale—my Lord said, on my taking notice of his being in tolerable spirits, that he exerted himself on purpose while he staid with me, that I might not reproach myself with having occasioned him any uneasiness.—“And yet, you dear “ little charmer,” continued he, kissing my forehead, “ you are really the original cause of his distress.”

I replied, that I was very much concerned about him.

“ I cannot let you be concerned about “ any thing,” said he — “ but I hope “ Selwyn, will do well.”

I must

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I must now, my dear Hebe, bid you adieu, yet not without desiring you to believe me ever

your affectionate

C. PERCY.

P. S. I wish Mr. Selwyn would quite forget *me*, and make his addresses to Mrs. Buller, who was first designed for him.

LETTER LXXXV.

MISS PETWORTH TO MISS PERCY.

I Take up my pen in the most violent hurry, to insist upon your never mentioning Mrs. Buller to Mr. Selwyn; your very wishes almost took away my
H 5 breath;

breath; I was afraid of your innocently telling him, in the goodness of your heart, that she loves him. Nothing on earth would be more indelicate than such a proceeding. Were I ever so much in love with a man—which however is not the case—I would die rather than let him know it. No—since the men have established the custom, unjust as it may be, of having the only right to chuse, let them, let them never experience the pleasure of being chosen. I do not, I never did, approve of a woman's making the first discovery of her inclinations, nor can I approve of her allowing too many freedoms to her lover, even after every thing is agreed upon. What numbers of our sex, Kitty, have been undone merely by the goodness of their hearts, by their not being able to bear a man tell them he is unhappy because

cause they will not suffer him to do every thing he pleases ! Men are great inroachers : few indeed can bear the least indulgence. My Lord, I hope, is not one of those who oblige a woman to keep them at a distance : yet you ought to be upon your guard, let him conduct himself with ever so much propriety. Your disposition is sufficient to seduce *him*, and to undo yourself ; gentle, tender, and susceptible as you are, beyond expression, you will, I know, find it the greatest of all difficulties, not only to restrain him, but to prevent his perceiving all that passes in your heart.— There can be nothing more indiscreet ; as a man, by seeing a woman incapable of refusing him any thing, will be naturally excited to attempt every thing. I was not indeed one of those women, yet my agreement to go to Scotland was so

very free a proceeding, that it could not but induce Euston to believe that he might do just what he pleased with me; and I should imagine that such a behaviour must always encourage the men to draw the same consequences from it. I think too I may safely venture to affirm, that of the numerous girls who consent to step into a post-chaise upon such an occasion, not one in ten would ever be married, were it not certain that the far greater number are run away with more for their fortunes, than for their persons or their accomplishments. Men are generally more deeply interested in the former, than the latter—choosing their mistresses for their personal attractions, their wives for more durable charms.—Having had a narrow escape myself, Kitty, let me warn you to take particular care of your own conduct. You are, and have
long

MISS PETWORTH. 157

long been posselt of the greatest tenderness for my Lord: you have an uncommon share of sensibility: he must see, and know this; and as decency will not permit him to marry, were he ever so ready, till Lady Hampton has been dead a year, you have both a considerable time to wait. My Lord will, probably, discover strong signs of impatience; and you, I imagine, will think the time tedious, if you do not tell him so. Men, Kitty, especially men who know they are beloved, soon find it out, they soon discover what we most wish to conceal. But when, like you, my dear, we make a boast of our love, and express it in the warmest terms, what is to be done? Can you suppose your lover should have a greater quantity of *reserve* than yourself? or shall you like him the better, if he has? Your situation,
believe

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believe me, is dangerous: yet I will hope every thing that is fit and right, from the innocence of my good, tho' gentlest Kitty. Remember, however, that tho' a woman can never be too mild, too complying, after she is a wife, yet too much condescension before may prevent her from ever being married. Remember this, and do not forget to be silent with regard to Mrs. Buller, as you value the affection of

your

HEBE PETWORTH.

LET.

MISS PETWORTH. 159

LETTER LXXXVI.

Miss PERCY to Miss PETWORTH.

YOUR last letter, my Hebe, was a kind one: yet were you not rather too severe, and too nice, with respect to Mrs. Buller? you will, I fancy, think so, when I tell you Mr. Selwyn is really desirous of knowing who the lady is, that has favoured him with her good opinion.

He came here yesterday morning; I happened to be alone, and expressed all the pleasure I really felt at seeing him better.

He

He replied, that he was not quite right, and added, that he should not be so till he was happy enough to meet with a lady to supply the place I had so long held in his heart, wishing, at the same time, to have it supplied by *her* who had done him the honour to discover so much partiality for him—"I am now "convinced," continued he, "that a man "is more likely to be happy with the "woman who loves *him*, than with her "whom *he* loves, without having his passion returned."--He then pressed me so earnestly to tell him who the lady in question was, that I hardly was able to refuse him. You will, I know, chide me again, Hebe, and perhaps add, that I cannot deny a man any thing; but you are mistaken. I did not name Mrs. Buller, tho' I hope you will give me leave to tell him, when I see him next;

MISS PETWORTH. 161

as I have promised to obtain her permission to communicate the desirable intelligence to him. My Lord thinks that my leave to inform Mr. Selwyn who the lady is, without her knowledge, would be doing infinitely more justice to her, and certainly wound her delicacy less.

I said, in reply, that I was afraid you would not consent, looking upon such a permission as a breach of trust.

He answered, that tho', in general, people could not pay too great a regard to the confidence reposed in them, there were some situations in which a breach of that confidence might be pardonable, adding, that the present affair was a case in point—Mrs. Buller, indeed, should be ignorant of Mr. Selwyn's being
told

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told *she* is the lady who declared prepossession in his favour. If the intelligence he receives should not prove agreeable to him, she will be still ignorant, and consequently not hurt by the communication of it. If Mr. Selwyn is pleased to hear that Mrs. Buller is the lady with such prepossessions, she will not only feel a satisfaction from not having been accessory to the information concerning her, but be also spared the anxiety she must naturally have felt after having made a discovery, on her side, while she waited for the result of it. This is my Lord's opinion of the affair, and I am inclined to believe that when you have thoroughly considered it, you will think as he does. Let me know, however, your thoughts upon this subject—a subject which becomes

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MISS PETWORTH. 163

comes very interesting—immediately,
and you will greatly oblige

your affectionate

C. PERCY.

P. S. My Lord adds, that it may be
sometimes both necessary and laudable
to deceive people into happiness.

LETTER LXXXVII.

MISS PETWORTH TO MISS PERCY.

RIGID and severe as you may think
me, Kitty, I must hold in detesta-
tion every species of deceit; yet as I very
sincerely love and esteem Mrs. Buller,
and believe it almost impossible for Mr.
Selwyn, supposing him to be free from

any

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any other engagement, not to think of her as I do, I will go as far as I can, in honour, to serve her.

Soon after I received your last letter, I took an opportunity to say to her, "I wish Mr. Selwyn would now think of *you*, my dear friend, as he has given up Miss Percy."

She replied, with a glowing face, and a deep sigh, "Mr. Selwyn knows that I was once designed for *him*—he knows too, that I have been for some time at liberty."

"Very true," said I, "but he has had such discouragement in his addresses to Miss Percy, that he will not, I fancy, attempt any lady again, if he is not almost sure of her heart."

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MISS PETWORTH. 165

She answered—"He must never know
" the situation of mine from *me*; he
" will know it from no other person, I
" hope; from no persons who call them-
" selves my friends will he ever know it.
" I cannot bear the indelicacy of such a
" confession, and beg that you will not
" mention it to me again. I am deter-
" mined to have nothing more to say to
" a man who has never entertained any
" thoughts of me; a man whom I
" should endeavour to forget as fast
" as possible."

I could not, by any means whatever,
get any thing more out of her relating to
him. She either gave an immediate turn
to the conversation, or rose up to leave
the room, the moment I attempted to re-
new it. Not a syllable more have I been
able to draw from her upon this subject,
nor

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nor have I any thing to say farther concerning it. I only wish, sincerely wish, I could serve Mrs. Buller with her own consent; but as that is not to be done, let the affair drop here, I beseech you; at least, till some better method can be thought of to bring her and Selwyn together: besides, there is really no time for it at present, as Mr. Edwards has been troubled lately with a nervous complaint, in consequence of his sedentary life. He has been ordered to Bright-helmstone: Mrs. Buller goes with him, and I, at their request, accompany them; but I shall first come and bid adieu to my dear Kitty.

Yours,

HEBE PETWORTH.

L E T.

LETTER LXXXVIII.

MISS PERCY TO MISS PETWORTH.

YOUR last, my dear Hebe, has put the best thought in the world into my head, but I shall not tell you what it is at present, lest it should not take place: if you please, therefore, we will leave Mrs. Buller and Mr. Selwyn together, or separately, as it happens.

I am invited by Mrs. Brudenel to accompany her to her house near Windsor, for the summer. My Lord obligingly designs to take one at Datchet, that he may be near us.

I wish

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I wish, my dear Hebe, you were not at so great a distance ; I wish also that you would tell me whether you really intend to accept of Colonel Fane or not.

Mr. Euston has been here two or three times : he is very much altered by his illness, and has been advised to bathe in the sea for his disorder. He says, however, that nothing, he is sure, can be of any service to him, but your giving him hopes of being one day not only reconciled, but united to him.

I plainly told him, the last time he talked to me in this strain, that I actually believed you would never have him.

“ If I was sure,” replied he, “ that
“ Miss Petworth would marry Colonel
“ Fane,

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"Fane, I would go abroad immediately."

And, indeed, if you have any such design, it is better to let him know it, as he will then be the sooner out of his pain. 'Tis rather hard upon him, Hebe, that you will neither let him be certain of one thing nor another. I wish you are not grown a great flirt; yet I am not willing to think the worst, as you must be ever dear to

your

C. PERCY.

P. S. I have profited by the long letter of advice you wrote; and have now brought myself to keep my Lord at a proper distance. I think he loves me the better for it; I am certain it makes him more eager, and that is no small

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advantage

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advantage gained. Pray let me know when you will come, that I may be at home. Mrs. Brudenel wishes you would dine with us.

LETTER LXXXIX.

Miss PETWORTH to Miss PERCY.

I Thank Mrs. Brudenel and you for your obliging invitation to dinner, but I must beg to be excused. I will, certainly, however, see you in the evening, and I hope I shall find you alone, without Mr. Euston, at least. You may tell him, if you please, that as I have given the Colonel some encouragement, I shall not make any change in my behaviour, that neither of them may have

MISS PETWORTH. 171

have reason to think me a great flirt. Col. Fane, indeed, has been, and is still, very solicitous to please me, and I have but one doubt to hinder me from giving him my hand : could that doubt be removed, I should not hesitate a moment ; and so you may tell Euston, from

your affectionate

HEBE PETWORTH.

LETTER XC.

From the SAME to the SAME.

Brightbelmstone.

WE arrived here last night ; Mrs. Buller and I in a post-chaise, Mr. Edwards and Colonel Fane on horseback,

I 2

Here

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Here is a great deal of company, but as Mr. Edwards had wrote to secure a little house for us, we shall be right soon.

In Continuation.

Mr. Selwyn is lodged under the same roof with us—Wonderful ! you will say ; especially, as I told you, when I took leave, that our house was only just large enough to hold us. The case is, when Mr. Selwyn came down, all the lodgings had been previously taken, and he could not get a single room. As we met in the town, he paid his compliments to *me* and Mrs. Buller, who looked, I thought, rather embarrassed. To relieve her, I chattered away to Selwyn, and he among, other things, said that he had been sent hither by his physician, after
having

MISS PETWORTH. 173

having been very much weakened by a nervous fever, and strangely disappointed about his lodging.

Mr. Edwards, who is entirely composed of good-nature, heard what he said, and as soon as he heard it, found a remedy, by offering to accommodate him with us, "if the ladies would not be too much crowded."

I, who thought both *of* and *for* my dear Mrs. Buller, cried, "By no means; we have no spare room."

There, Kitty, you see I took it entirely upon myself to save my friend, who is as discreet as she is amiable. Selwyn addressed a very elegant compliment to her, finding her silent. This giving the

I 3 lady

lady spirits, she replied, and all was as well as could be.

Now, Kitty, do I most shrewdly suspect that you are at the bottom of this, and actually sent Selwyn hither. Look to it, if you have—we shall never forgive you, if you have been telling tales : but whatever you may have said, Mr. Selwyn behaves with all that good sense and good breeding which is natural to him ; and I do not yet know whether I have not a mind to him myself, only here is Colonel Fane in the way ; here is also a third competitor, no less a man than a baronet, Sir William Lauder, who has already distinguished me, and I begin to fancy he will be the favourite. There is something inexpressibly seducing, Kitty, in a title ; you thought so yourself, you know, my dear, when you preferred

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preferred my Lord to Selwyn. I cannot write any longer—They stay for me to go to the rooms, so farewell, my Kitty, and believe me

ever yours,

HEBE PETWORTH.

LETTER XCI.

From the SAME to the SAME.

SO, now the groupe is compleat. Euston is here. In short, here is every body, except Lord Hampton and Miss Percy. I should not be at all surprised to see *you* enter the rooms, either married or single. However, I pay little attention to any person but Sir William, who is young, handsome, rich, and entertaining. He was my partner

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at the last ball, and has solicited my hand for the next; I have neither granted his request, nor denied it. I have a mind to let Colonel Fane see that he is not quite so sure of me as he thinks, for though I have always declined his offers, yet as there was no getting rid of him, I imagined that I might make no bad use of him by trifling with him. By keeping men off you bring them on. I am, in fact, become, Kitty, what you called me in one of your letters, a downright flirt. I see my power, and am resolved to avail myself of it, at least for a little while, by way of revenge for what I have suffered by man. I have now four admirers at my service. Dear, good Edwards, who has been silently my lover ever since he became my guardian, has just discovered a passion, which has been, he tells me, hopeless
from

MISS PETWORTH. 177

from the beginning ; and, indeed, I am very sorry to say that I fear it must be so ; there being the same reason for declining the acceptance of his hand, as for refusing the rest. Colonel Fane, as he is not quite so modest, still expects success. Euston, while he looks at me, seems, like the rattle-snake, to think that I shall, by and by, drop into his mouth : but Sir William will soon convince them all how idle their pretensions have been, as he appears to be full as vain as he is handsome.

Thus, Kitty, you have a complete list of my lovers—But I was going to hasten to a conclusion without mentioning Selwyn ; he has attached himself quietly to Mrs. Buller, and troubles not his head who likes or dislikes his conduct.

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Ah, Kitty, Kitty ! you have been a fly chit from the beginning ! You have told my Lord, and my Lord has told his friend. However, I am glad they seem in a way to be happy at last ; and as I always charged you not to blab, I cannot be blamed, let what will happen. I remain, therefore, your innocent, as well as

affectionate

HEBE PETWORTH.

L E T T E R. XCII.

Mr. EUSTON to Sir WALTER CAREY.

Brightbelmstone.

I Came down to this place immediately after Miss Petworth, and found her in high flirtation with Sir William Lauderdale,

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der, though she is at the same time followed by Colonel Fane, and beloved by Edwards. What a formidable set of rivals ! There are no farther hopes for *me*. I will stay, however, till she has made her choice. I will know whom she really prefers, and sincerely wish, since she will not permit *me* to make her happy, that she may fix upon one who is both able and ready to promote her felicity in every shape ; to render her as truly happy as she deserves to be. I am not acquainted with one woman who has so much beauty and elegance ; who has so chaste a mind, and so bright an understanding ; for a lively, yet solid conversation, I know not any woman like her. Many women have envied her, none have equalled her. How great, therefore, is my loss ! and how much more severely is it felt by me, as

I was myself the cause of it! Yet I may still gaze on the amiable creature, till I am for ever removed from her sight; while I am capable of seeing her, I may look on every thing that is lovely in a female form. I cannot think that any of her present followers are capable of making her happy. Mr. Edwards is a worthy character, but he is of too retired, too contemplative a turn; Colonel Fane has not sentiment enough; and Sir William is a finished coxcomb. The only consolation I receive under my disappointment, is from the moral certainty that she would have been happier with me than with any of them, had I not reckoned too much upon her favour. What endless anxiety does one foolish action sometimes occasion!—But 'tis in vain to reflect on what cannot be recalled. Yet, I think, that if she could be
made

MISS PETWORTH. 181

made thoroughly sensible of the remorse I feel for my egregious folly, and of the anguish I have endured, which I still endure, in consequence of her cruel determination never to be mine, she would—she must relent; and, with her condescending kindness, drive despondence from the breast of

your despairing friend,

E. EUSTON.

LETTER XCIII.

MISS PERCY to MISS PETWORTH.

INDEED, Hebe, you are mistaken.

I sit down in the greatest hurry to tell you so—Neither I nor my Lord have ever named Mrs. Buller to Mr. Selwyn. I only took upon me, when he said he

was

was ordered to bathe, to recommend Brighthelmstone, adding, that there he might meet with a lady suitable to him.

“Do you know of such a lady, Miss Percy?” replied he. “Can you recommend a lady to me?”

“No, indeed, Mr. Selwyn,” answered I; “besides, it is so nice a point, that I must beg leave to decline it.”

After having made me a very high compliment, and found he could not draw any thing out of me, he left me. When he came again to take leave, the subject was not renewed; he, therefore, heard not a syllable concerning Mrs. Buller from *me*, and my Lord says that *he* never once mentioned her. As I am then quite ignorant about her, send me
the

MISS PETWORTH. 183

the best and quickest intelligence: nothing would give me greater pleasure than the hearing that Mr. Selwyn was in a way to be happy with so amiable a woman, a woman who was, originally, designed for him.

What a delightful situation is this Windsor, Hebe! My Lord and Mrs. Brudenel have carried me to see the castle, park, and every thing worth seeing in this charming place, and the *environs*.

My Lord is ever obliging, ever affectionate, and the most delightful companion in the world. How uncommonly fortunate am I, Hebe, in being able to charm so attractive, so valuable a man! I wish, very heartily, that you were as happy with Mr. Euston, for notwithstanding the parade you make with
your

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your lovers, you will find no man more agreeable to you in every respect; you will never, I dare say, like any other man half so well. Don't be angry, with me Hebe, for this; it is the truth, and you cannot, with sincerity, deny it to
your affectionate

C. PERCY.

LETTER XCIV.

Mr. SELWYN to Lord HAMPTON.

Brightelmstone.

I Have seized the earliest opportunity that has offered, to write to you; to tell you that I look upon Miss Percy as my good genius: she has guided me to the destined port of happiness, without appearing to have such a design. I am, therefore, under the greater obligations

MISS PETWORTH. 185

tions to her, as her behaviour has not only saved *me* from much anxiety, but prevented the lady's delicacy from being wounded upon the occasion; and greatly wounded, I believe, it would have been, had she in the least suspected my knowing of her partiality in my favour. But your Lordship will, probably, imagine I am writing like an enigmatist: I will therefore explain myself.

I arrived here weary and quite out of spirits: to complete my discontent, the lodgings, which had been, I thought, secured for *me*, were let to a family, by mistake, and they at that time occupied them. Having no house to repair to, I went to walk on the *Stein*: there I, very fortunately, met Miss Petworth, Mrs. Buller, and Mr. Edwards, who finding me rather distressed for a lodging, politely

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politely offered me an apartment in their small house. I accepted of their offer with pleasure. This, of course, brought on an intimacy, and that intimacy made me insensibly acquainted with Mrs. Buller's infinite merit. I had admired her person and manners before; the former always appeared to me sufficiently handsome even for a sensualist, with regard to the fair sex, and the latter improved upon me every hour. There was now a particular softness in her behaviour to *me*; at least, I fancied so; and such a behaviour to a man who had been so long sighing for reciprocal affection, was, you must allow, extremely flattering. I, therefore, the more readily gave way to my growing prepossessions for this amiable woman, who had been, I found upon recollection, designed for me, but married, by the predominance of avarice
in

MISS PETWORTH. 187

in her father, to Buller, while I was in Italy, who made her the worst of husbands. This I remembered to have heard during his life, but I never had any acquaintance with her, had never seen her, indeed, but by mere accident, before I went abroad. I thought no more of her till I saw her at your house with Miss Petworth. I then beheld her as a very agreeable object; but as I was engaged to Miss Percy at that time, I did not, consequently, pay the attention to Mrs. Buller which she merited. She now appears to me in a very different light. The charms of her temper, the gentleness of her manners, and her tender attentions, particularly captivating to me, as I am far from being perfectly in health, will, I hope, make me amends for the loss of Miss Percy, to whom I beg my best acknowledgements for the
very

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very serviceable advice, she gave me—
That you may both enjoy the purest,
and most lasting felicity, is the fervent
wish of,

your faithful

JOHN SELWYN.

LETTER XCV.

Miss PETWORTH to Miss PERCY.

ALL goes well, Kitty. Selwyn and
my dear Mrs. Buller, are insepa-
rable. He looks and behaves as if he
really loved her. I have told her so
more than once, but she is so diffident
of her own merit, and so fearful, she
says, of being like those women who
mistake civility for love, that I almost
imagine,

MISS PETWORTH. 189

imagine, that she will not believe him to be serious, till he makes his proposals to her in form—Now I take him to be too delicate to mention them till he is pretty sure they will be entirely acceptable. Mrs. Buller thinks, sometimes, that he cannot so soon have effaced your image from his mind; tho' I fancy she does her best endeavours to substitute her own in the room of it.

We pass our time pleasantly enough here: my poor, good Edwards receives benefit from *batbing*, and his success gives me as much pleasure as if I was ducked myself every morning—I have been told, indeed, by Sir William, that if I will but submit to the fashionable *immerfion*—I shall rise like a second Venus from the ocean: I do not, however, intend to try the experiment, not find-
ing

ing any inclination to be a water-nymph. Selwyn says, women are naturally amphibious animals. I shall be glad to ask him whether you, Kitty, or Mrs. Buller, is, in his eye, the most amphibious one? But he begins to be so arch and saucy, that I do not care to meddle with him.

As to Euston I think he is entirely cured of his vivacity, he looks the very picture of despair: yet there is no trusting to appearances. A sudden turn in his affairs may, possibly, render him more lively and spirited, than ever. This Brighthelmstone has a wonderful effect upon some constitutions, I can assure you; tho' I am of opinion, that the people who come hither find themselves, in general, more relieved by their social meetings, than their sea dippings.

You

MISS PETWORTH. 191

You will perhaps tell me that I have met with a man to supply the place of Euston. You are mistaken. I will never have *him*, indeed, but why should I marry at all? I am not good enough for Edwards; I do not like Fane; and Sir William loves *himself* too well to have any affection for

your sincere friend

HEBE PETWORTH.

LETTER XCVI.

MR. SELWYN TO LORD HAMPTON.

IF you do not write soon to me, and tell me that you have paid my grateful acknowledgements to Miss Percy, they will increase so much that I shall fill more than a common sheet of paper

per with them. I am as happy as I can be with Mrs. Buller, till the ceremony which is to unite us for ever has been performed, and it is only delayed by *her* earnest desire, as she apprehends that the recovery of my health, which has been within these few days, in a very fluctuating state, may be retarded by a too speedy departure from Brighthelmstone. By her continual solicitude and assiduity about me, I have discovered so many excellencies in her, that, all charming as Miss Percy certainly is, I think it possible to be extremely happy with my amiable Henrietta. She has at length, kindly confessed that she always regretted her being obliged to marry Mr. Buller, but that as I was then abroad, as she had never been acquainted with me, as she could not tell whether I might find her agreeable, and whether I
had

MISS PETWORTH. 193

had not engaged myself, to some other lady, she made the less opposition to her father's will than she should have done, had she experienced the happiness of knowing me, of knowing that she was beloved by me.

There, Hampton, was not this speech a most flattering one? I have repeated it *verbatim*. The dear creature actually doats on me—How soft, how soothing, is the tenderness of a virtuous woman? I am now convinced that Miss Percy told me a fact, when she said that a man stands a much fairer chance of being happy with the woman who has chosen him, than with the woman merely of his own choice. I am apt to think, however—I am pretty sure, indeed—that had I been as well

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MISS PETWORTH. 193

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acquainted with Mrs. Buller, before I knew Miss Percy, as I was with *her*, I should have absolutely adored her.

In Continuation.

I was interrupted in the middle of my letter, by Mrs. Buller. Running into the room, quite out of breath, and throwing herself into a chair, ready to faint, she exclaimed—"O Mr. Selwyn! Sir William Lauder has killed Mr. Euston.—Where is Miss Petworth?"

I flew to her, and begged her to compose herself, and not to think of any thing to disconcert her more—adding, that as soon as I saw *her* better, I would go and enquire after Euston.

"Oh!

MISS PETWORTH. 195

"Oh! do not mind *me*," replied she,
"but find out poor Hebe; for *I* have
"not spirits to tell her what she *must*
"hear."

"You think then, that she loves
"him?" said I gravely.

"Lord bless me! to be sure," answered she; "Do you doubt it?—But
"pray leave *me* now, and go in search
"of *her*."

I complied with her request, after having seen her a little recovered: but soon returned, as I had been told that Miss Petworth was gone to take an airing upon the Downs, with some ladies of her acquaintance; I had staid, however, long enough to hear an account of the duel, which was occasioned, it

K 2 seems,

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seems, by Sir William's having spoken in a slighting manner of Miss Perworth. Euston, over-hearing his injurious expressions, insisted upon his not only making a recantation of what he said, but upon his declaring publickly, that he had, by uttering falsehoods, attempted to blacken the lady's reputation. Sir William peremptorily refusing to make the acknowledgment required, Euston called him an infamous scoundrel. The Baronet then drew; Euston did the same; Sir William, after a few passes, being wounded, Euston asked him if he was willing to agree to what he had demanded? He replied, that he would not hear of any submissions, ran furiously to his antagonist, and wounded him in the sword arm: he was going to make another thrust, with uncommon eagerness, when
some

MISS PETWORTH. 197

some gentlemen who had been out upon a walk, returning home, ran up to Sir William, and prevented farther mischief. They also attended Euston to his lodgings, sent for a surgeon, and staid by him till his wounds were dressed, of which the surgeon said he could form no judgment, till the first dressings were taken off.

This intelligence I related to Mrs. Buller, and we both imagined that Miss Petworth must hear of it, before she came home, but we happened to be under a mistake—she returned in high spirits—Mrs. Buller and I were by no means pleased to see her so elevated, knowing that she would feel the alarming information more acutely—Such an affair, in such a place, could not, we knew, be long concealed from her, and

we had very little time to prepare her for it. We both, therefore, endeavoured to begin a kind of moralizing conversation, and talked of the sudden changes in life from pleasure to pain, from happiness to misery.

Looking at us, at last, very earnestly, she said, "You are mighty grave to-day, good people. I cannot think what has happened to you since I was out."

"You have heard nothing of the duel then?" said I.

"No;" replied she — a little alarmed — "Between whom?"

"Why we are afraid to tell you," said Mrs. Buller: "but you *must* know it, my dear Hebe, and—"

"The

MISS PETWORTH. 199

"The sooner the better," continued I—"Between Sir William and Mr. Euston."

She started, and changed colour. After a little pause, as if she waited to hear what she seemed to believe was too dreadful for either of us to pronounce, with a face as pale as death, and with a faltering voice, she cried—"He is dead then!"

"No—he is *not* dead, Hebe," said Mrs. Buller.

"He is *not* dead," added I; "but we cannot tell how near he may be to death, as the surgeon has not any flattering expectations of his recovery."

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Fetching a deep sigh, she covered her face with her handkerchief, and suffered Mrs. Buller to lead her out of the room; being, I imagine, very much ashamed to let me see her so much concerned for a man, whom she ought not, she believes, to love, since the attack he made on her. She loves him, however, sincerely; and yet, if he *should* recover, it is a thousand to one whether she will ever marry him or not. There is, to be sure, a great deal to be said on *her* side of the question, and she has hitherto shewn a very noble, a very commendable resolution, in persisting to reject him. I took Euston's part, indeed, and would gladly have accommodated matters between them to their mutual satisfaction, but I think that the women, in general, are too ready to pardon the indelicate attempts of a lover,

ver,

ver, and to excuse numberless freedoms which are really inexcusable, which ought never to be allowed. It is to be presumed that no man can be really happy with a licentious or a weak woman, with a wanton or a foolish wife: and it is the extreme indiscretion of some women, who either inadvertently or voluntarily encourage men to suppose improper liberties agreeable to them. The encouragement, indeed, or the mere sufferance even of decent freedoms, make men but too apt to suppose that others, not to be warranted by decorum, will be permitted; and as many have found themselves very well received after having behaved in a manner for which they should have been discarded with disdain.—But this subject will carry me too far—I shall only add, therefore, the woman who imagines that the reformed

libertine makes the best husband, is under the influence of a very false maxim.

It is not in my power to send you a supplement to the above information about poor Euston, whom I very much pity, as his present misfortune proceeds from a most excellent turn of mind, which will not let him hear the woman whom he attempted to injure, calumniated on *his* account. His noble, his disinterested endeavours, to extenuate his former indiscretions, at least to atone for them, deserve, I think, Miss Petworth's consideration, and ought to disarm her resentment against him. If he lives, I shall be strongly for her marrying him.

Pray

MISS PETWORTH. 203

Pray try to learn the sentiments of your amiable Kitty, upon this head; she will, I am sure, feel for her friend. If Euston should recover, may he still find *her* among the number of his advocates, as he will most certainly find
your faithful

J. SELWYN.

LETTER XCVII.

MISS PETWORTH TO MISS PERCY.

WHAT strange revolutions do we experience in our fortunes, and in our minds!—I feel myself at present in no desirable situation.

Poor Euston—I suppose you have heard it—is dying: he was wounded in

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correct-

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correcting the insolence of Sir William Lauder, who had the most dishonourable intentions with regard to me—Why would he not forget me, after having rendered himself unworthy of my love? It is by persisting to follow me about, in hopes of repairing what is never to be repaired, that he has brought this misfortune upon himself, a misfortune which will make *me* completely wretched. Would I had never known him! You cannot think how much I am distressed upon his account. Mrs. Buller, Mr. Edwards, and Mr. Selwyn, all try to comfort me, but I am quite incapable of receiving any consolation. Tho' I never meant to marry Euston, I never wished he should die. His death would be too severe a punishment for the fault which he, in consequence of *my* folly, committed :

MISS PETWORTH. 205

mitted : a fault which he could not have committed had I been discreet.

Poor Euston ! what wretches do our passions, when we do not govern them, make us ! How much do we both stand accused to ourselves ? Pray heaven he may recover ! Pray heaven that he may, properly affected by his sufferings, be cured of all his foibles, all his failings ! May he never think any more of *me* ! If he *lives*, I will no more appear in publick : I will settle in a retired part of the world, where I may be no longer in the way of being taken notice of. If he *dies*—gracious God ! give me fortitude sufficient to support the alarming, the affecting idea ! to support the dreadful certainty of having been the sole cause of the death — of the eternal misery,

fery, perhaps, of a fellow creature, who once loved me—who still, I have the greatest reason to believe, loves me beyond every thing in this world.

In Continuation.

I could not go on, Kitty: my tears flowed too fast; and even now I can hardly restrain them, while I tell you, that Mr. Selwyn is just come from Euston.

The surgeons — for there is another called in — say that his recovery is very doubtful, occasioned by the violence of his fever, which they attribute entirely to the disturbance of his mind.

What can be done to set his mind at rest? I have desired, I have intreated
Mr.

MISS PETWORTH. 207

Mr. Selwyn to say any thing from *me* which will in his opinion contribute to its composure: for tho' I think that he was quite in the wrong to quarrel with Sir William, upon *my* account, yet I should be much more wrong in suffering him to be lost for want of any consolation in *my* power to administer to him. I cannot write any more at present—I am too much oppressed. Pity me, my dear girl, and believe me, in spite of all my afflictions,

yours

HEBE PETWORTH.

LET-

LETTER XCVIII.

MR. SELWYN to Lord HAMPTON.

THIS duel has effected, at last, what might never have happened, I think, by any other occurrence. Miss Petworth feels most sensibly every pang felt by her lover, who is inconceivably agitated about *her*. He is in a high fever, and frequently delirious. He raves about his Hebe's never forgiving him, and swears that he shall die contented, if she would but pity and pardon him.

I acquainted her with all he said concerning her. I described his situation to her, in the most melancholy, the most moving terms I could make use of. She appeared to be almost tortured to death

MISS PETWORTH. 209

death at the relation I delivered. She bade me go and say any thing to him to contribute to his relief. I readily obeyed her, you may be sure. I even ventured to hint—in the gentlest manner, that I thought there were hopes of her yielding, at last, to his wishes. His joy was so great upon the occasion, that he was almost frantic; it increased his fever; and I have not yet forgiven myself for having mentioned what I did, before he was pronounced quite out of danger; I have not, however, told Miss Petworth any thing about her lover's increasing danger, in consequence of my well-intended proceedings. I must endeavour to bring him to a right use of his reason by all the soothing arts in my power.

Sir William is quite well already. He has been to see Euston; he has asked him pardon, and he has waited
on

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on Miss Petworth to implore *her* forgiveness; but she would not hear of it: she ran to the farthest part of the house, and begged that he might not be admitted. Mrs. Buller has had an infinite deal of trouble about her, and Mr. Edwards is exceedingly unhappy upon *her* account. He loves her as much as Euston does, and she behaves in a manner to him which cannot but secure both his tenderness and esteem. Yet I believe she never will feel the former for him. Euston is the man of her heart, and if he had not abused her confidence in him, they would have been uncommonly happy in each other. If he lives, she will have him, I fancy, and then his felicity will be inexpressible. The almost certainty of this, has thrown *me* into a croud of reflections upon a subject that never engaged my attention so deeply before: but really, my Lord,

the

MISS PETWORTH. 211

the women have not fair play in their connections with us, and custom stands our friend so much, that I think they have great reason to complain. For an instance now: Let us suppose that Miss Petworth marries Euston: by so doing she will make him the happiest fellow upon earth. Supremely happy will he be, not only in possessing the woman whom he most passionately loves, but in being assured that she is immaculately chaste, having repelled the attacks of the man for whom she felt the sincerest affection. What advantage, now, will *she* gain by this marriage? She will indeed, be united to the man whom she loves; but will she not also be united to the man who attempted to injure her in the most unwarrantable manner, to the man who really threw a slur upon her character, and who committed gross offences against honour and decorum, while she was
under

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under his protection? *He* marries a woman who has been severely tried, and found invaluable. *She* marries a man who has rendered himself totally unworthy of *her*, and of every other woman of virtue : and yet it will be *right* in her to *marry him*, if she ever marries at all. As they are indeed circumstanced at present she *should not* refuse him, for he has endeavoured to silence, at the hazard of his life, the detracting tongues of those who attempted to blast her reputation, in consequence of her elopement with *him*. It is impossible for him to do more than he has done at present. I am glad to hear that Miss Percy is of my opinion with regard to this interesting point. Pray tell her, that she does me great honour, and that I am hers, as well as yours,

most sincerely,

J. SELWYN.
L E T.

LETTER XCIX.

MISS PETWORTH TO MISS PERCY.

I Return you many thanks, my dear Kitty, for your kind letter. I am pleased that you retain your opinion with regard to my behaviour to Mr. Euston, who is, they assure me, something better. I will relate part of a conversation which I have had with the excellent Mr. Edwards upon this subject.

Mr. Edwards, when he saw me almost overwhelmed with sorrow, gave up his whole time to me, and employed the most soothing eloquence to make me satisfied with myself. Would you believe

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lieve it possible, Kitty? This amiable man has half reconciled me to what I thought I never could have been. He tells me, that a woman of my delicacy can never marry any man but Mr. Euston, lest he should entertain suspicions which, tho' as false as they are injurious, may serve to render him extremely unhappy—"By Mr. Euston," continued he, "you will always be revered, as well "as beloved."

What a man is this Edwards, my dear Kitty? He is truly my guardian—He is my guardian angel. Twice has he saved me from the greatest distress, from shame, perhaps from ruin.—But I am unhappy—Poor Euston is not yet quite out of danger—my fears, at least, make me imagine that he is not.—How I doat on Edwards! Should Euston be
lost,

lost, he would, I am afraid, expect me to be *his*. But will not what he has just said prevent his encouraging any such hopes? Can a woman indeed, of any delicacy, marry one man when she has been out all night with another? Oh, no! it cannot be.

Mrs. Buller, the dear, kind Mrs. Buller, the counter-part of her deserving brother, tells me that she is sure I shall be happy at last: but I dare not indulge so flattering an idea.—If Euston dies, Kitty, I will never know love again: I will be the sincere, the unalterable friend of Edwards, but never the wife of any man. This is the fixed resolution of

yours

HEBE PETWORTH.

LET.

LETTER C.

Mr. SELWYN to Lord HAMPTON,

EUSTON is pronounced by the faculty to be quite safe. But an interview between him and Miss Petworth, may overset him again : he is in such extasies only with the most distant hopes of seeing her, that I will not answer for the consequences of a meeting. And yet he is so wildly impatient, that there will be no putting the interview off much longer. The lady is not in a much more composed state, tho' I can perceive that she does all she can to conceal her emotions : emotions which are the

the more apparent, from her efforts to suppress them. She has declared, that she cannot see him unless we are all present, and also, that she knows not how she shall bear it. As to him, he will be the least able to support the interview—I shall indeed be almost afraid to bring them together, till Euston is stronger; and stronger he is not like to be, till he receives some proofs of her forgiveness, and returning love. He cannot yet believe that she will ever accept of him: his anxiety retards his recovery. My dear Henrietta and I, assisted by Mr. Edwards, are endeavouring to contrive to have them married at the same time with ourselves: their alarms will then be all over. Hebe then need be no longer afraid of Euston. Are not *you* of our opinion? do you

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not think it will be infinitely better to remove all apprehensions of every kind, and to make them happy as soon as possible? I wish *your* situation would permit you to come down immediately, with Miss Percy. Your presence, and that of your amiable companion, would be particularly serviceable, I imagine, to Euston, at this critical juncture; your coming with *her*, would certainly give great pleasure to

your ever faithful

J. SELWYN.

LET.

LETTER CI.

LORD HAMPTON TO MR. SELWYN.

I Sincerely congratulate Miss Petworth on Mr. Euston's being so well recovered, and hope she will not now throw him back by a refusal. At the first hearing this affair, I was of opinion that no lady should encourage a man to take unwarrantable liberties with her: but as Miss Petworth unluckily occasioned the freedoms she has so long resented, by her elopement with her lover, she ought to receive him into favour—especially as her own conduct has not been quite defensible—in consequence of his atoning behaviour, since he offended her.

L 2

My

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My dearest girl writes to the same effect to her friend, and *her* letter accompanies *this*. But how could *you*, Selwyn, knowing the strength of my passion, and of that which my lovely Kitty, I flatter myself, feels for me, think of tantalizing me thus, with so near a view of your felicity; a felicity, which I must not yet hope to enjoy? My Kitty, however, cruel as she is in this respect, has expressed so great a desire to be present at the marriage of her Hebe, that we shall be with you in a few days. The little wheedler has prevailed on me to wait for her, till my year of mourning is expired, and to come down among you, to be witness to the joys which I am, for some time, forbidden to taste; yet she will not trust herself with me alone. No—Mrs. Brudenel must be of
the

MISS PETWORTH. 221

the party, or she will not come; and Mrs. Brudenel, who has no aversion to Brighelmstone, who loves my little Percy—(who indeed does not?) has consented. Do not therefore suffer Hebe to make fools of her friends: let her take particular care not to set a bad example to her Kitty, who is *your* friend as sincerely as she is the friend of

your

HAMPTON.

P. S. I have told Kitty not to betray us, as I suppose Miss Petworth does not suspect our designs upon her.

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LET.

LETTER CII.

Miss PERCY to Miss PETWORTH.

I Am exceedingly glad, my dear Hebe, to find that Mr. Euston is better, and I hope your pardon will restore him to his former health and spirits. Wishing very much to be with you, I have prevailed on Lord Hampton to let me come down, as Mrs. Brudenel will be kind enough to accompany me. I long to see you perfectly reconciled to the man who is now, everybody thinks, deserving of you, and am, as affectionately as ever,

your

C. PERCY.

P. S. As

MISS PETWORTH. 223

P. S. As Mrs. Brudenel and I have a few preparations to make which will detain us in London a few days, my Lord bids me say, that he hopes to hear again from Mr. Selwyn. I shall be rejoiced to hear of your having consented to give Mr. Euston your hand.

LETTER CIII.

MR. SELWYN TO LORD HAMPTON.

THEY have met—but such a meeting!—I was under the greatest apprehensions for them both.

Yesterday morning, Mrs. Buller and Miss Petworth, accompanied by Mr. Edwards and myself, agreed to go to Euston's lodgings.

L 4

Hebe

Hebe got up, and sat down several times, before she could bring herself to go.

“Are you still offended with him, then, my dear Miss Petworth?” said I. “Can you peremptorily refuse, any longer, to restore tranquility to the breast of that man who has been near losing his life on *your* account?”

“No,” replied she, rising again—“but I am so much affected—I do not know how I shall bear to look on him. I shudder at the very thoughts of what he has endured.”

“You have it in your power,” said I, “to convert all his sufferings into blessings, by making him the only reparation you can, by giving yourself to him for ever.”

“Oh,

"Oh—I cannot—I cannot"—answered she, all in a flutter.

"Come"—said I, calmly to her,
"give me your arm. Let us go—It
"will soon be over."

She did not refuse any longer, but she was evidently very much agitated.

When we came to the door of Euston's apartment, Mr. Edwards opened it. The wounded man, pale as a ghost, from the loss of blood, and from the anxiety by which he had been tormented, advanced. He was going to throw himself at the feet of his Hebe, when she sunk, lifeless, into his arms.

I carried her to a sofa—Euston and Mrs. Buller endeavoured to recover her.

The situation she was in, and the efforts made to restore her to her senses, so greatly affected Euston, in his weak condition, that as soon as she opened her eyes, the blood gushed from his wound. I then began to be exceedingly alarmed, and expected to see them both in a dangerous state. But the consequences which I apprehended, instead of being fatal, proved fortunate.

Miss Petworth started, and screamed, but did not lose her senses again. She even rose to assist Mr. Edwards and me in stopping the blood, till the surgeon came. *Her* assistance had such an effect upon the wounded man, that it occasioned a melting tenderness in his eyes, voice, and manner, which entirely subdued all her resentment.—In her own bosom the tenderest sensations were roused,

MISS PETWORTH. 227

ed, and she not only freely forgave him, but promised to give him her hand the moment he was recovered. Edwards and I left Mrs. Buller and Miss Petworth with him—They did not return to us till evening. The former then told us that every thing was in a favourable way. Make haste, therefore, or we shall have tied the Gordian knot before your arrival. *You*, of all men, ought not to complain of a little delay, after having found every thing go on so smoothly. Only think how long *I* have been tossed about. But I am well rewarded for all I have suffered from uncertainty and despair—my Henrietta deserves the most grateful, the most affectionate returns, from your

faithful, and now—very happy

JOHN SELWYN.

LETTER CIV.

Mr. EUSTON to Sir WALTER CAREY.

'TIS all over, Carey, and I am the happiest of mortals. In short, I hardly know whether I am a mortal or not—I seem to be raised far above all the ideas I ever entertained of earthly felicity. But possibly you think all these raptures arising from her having pardoned me, from her having promised to be mine for ever—She *is* mine for ever—I am actually in possession of the dear creature herself—we were married yesterday, there was a little decent reluctance on *her* part, but my tender persua-

persuasions, supported by the friendly efforts of Mr. Edwards, Mrs. Buller, Mr. Selwyn, and even Lord Hampton, who all, most kindly, most powerfully pleaded for me—got the better of it. The dear angelic girl, overcome at last, averted her fine eyes, for a moment, and then gave me her hand, with a half stifled sigh, saying at the same time, “There---are you now satisfied?”

“I shall not be satisfied till you are
“actually mine, my adorable Hebe.”
That was my answer.

She then raised a few objections, but I soon conquered them: every thing was ready for the next day, and Selwyn, who has shewed himself a real friend, was united to Mrs. Buller on the same morning: they insisted, however, upon our having the ceremony performed

formed first. You may be sure I did not oppose that motion. Hebe looked like an angel of light in her bridal cloaths; for as she had no leisure to make any preparations, she was only dressed in a white worked-muslin gown---Her only ornaments were her beauty, and her innocence. She always appeared to me lovely beyond expression, but I found her so beyond my expectations. I found her as tender as she is beautiful, as affectionate as she is virtuous---Happy, however, as my present situation is, I would, by no means advise any man to make an attempt upon the virtue of the woman whom he intends to marry, for several reasons---But I have no time now to waste in moral reflections, and I am very certain that you are too well acquainted with my present mode of thinking,

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ing, with regard to the behaviour of the two sexes before marriage, to want a minute detail of my sentiments concerning it. I am, my dear friend, still, with as much sincerity as ever,

your faithful

E. EUSTON.

F I N I S.

Miss FETWORTH

and who agreed to the delivery of
the two large boxes containing the
same to me, my dear friend, with
a great deal of pleasure as ever,
your friend
J. Lupton

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